DRIVER 3 GOTTA-SEE PICS!

2 MUST-HAVE POSTERS!

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

computer and video games

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

53 NEW PICS!

Grind, climb and drive your way to becoming the new Pro Skater! Played to death ONLY in CVG

NEW PICS!

METAL GEAR 3

EXCLUSIVE INFO INSIDE

RED-HOT AND RATED!

WWE RAW 2

JAK II

YU-GI-OH!, BUFFY 2

SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

WRESTLEMANIA XIX

ADVANCE WARS 2

VIEWTIFUL JOE

JEDI ACADEMY

DOOM III

WE'VE PLAYED IT!
FIRST HANDS-ON VERDICT INSIDE

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

PLUS! GT 4 VS MARIO KART VS GOTHAM 2

Who'll take first place in this vicious fight to the finish line?

OUTTA THE WAY TEKKEN, DBZ IS PS2'S MOST EXPLOSIVE FIGHTER EVER!

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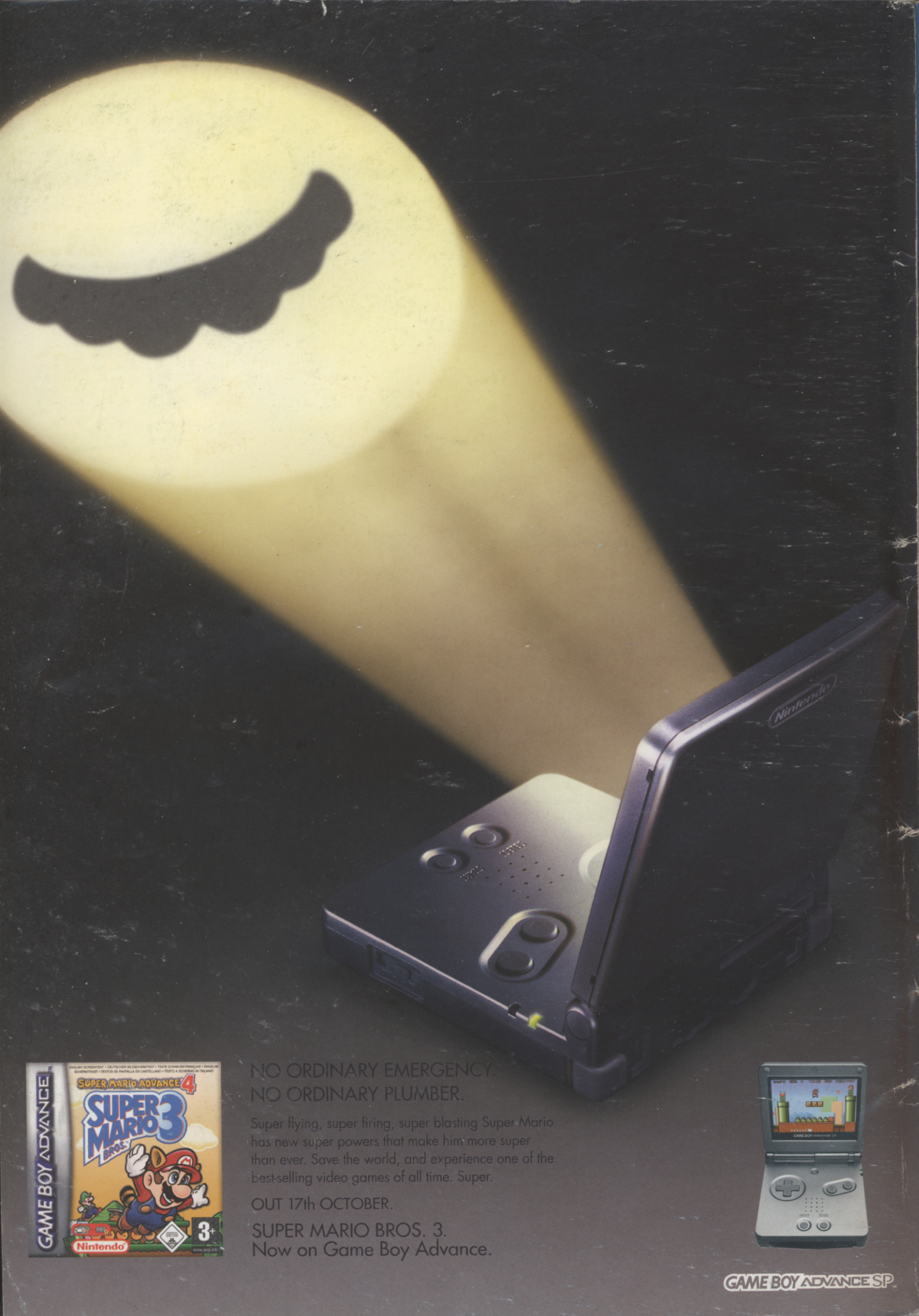
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SECOND-PLACE IS FOR LOSERS...

Got a dictionary? Look up 'exclusive'. Alongside 'not shared' and 'found only in one place' you'll find CVG. Why? Because what you hold in your hands is the very definition of the word exclusive. And this issue is a perfect example, being quite literally packed with games, gossip and great screens games you won't find anywhere else.

When Activision wanted to give out the world's first hands-on playtest of Tony Hawk's Underground, which mag did they choose? And where can you find never-before-seen pics of the new Dragon Ball Z fighter, the first verdict on Doom III and the exclusive review of Simpson's Hit & Run? If you answered CVG to all of the above, give yourself a gold star – looks like a CVG regular so you know we always bring the exclusives on the games you want to know about.

But just because CVG is filled with exclusives, doesn't mean we it exclusive. We're confident that anyone who loves videogames will love CVG, for one simple reason – we love 'em too, which is why we bust our nuts to bring the very best games and info every month.

Alex Simmons Editor

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Why you MUST play the Hawkster's new genre-bender. Another CVG exclusive

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Nerve-jangling single-player and four-way multiplayer busted open like a point-blank headshot. PLUS: never-seen-before new screenshots!

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Will the sequel rub salt in the wounds of the original or can WWE fans now start to take Xbox seriously?

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The three greatest racers ever are at the starting grid. The winner could turn the tide in the console wars...

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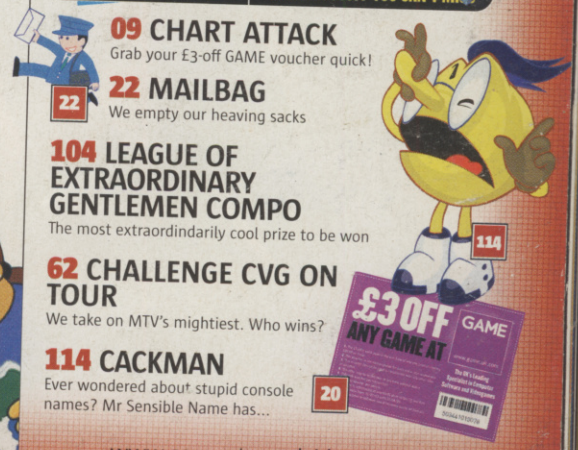

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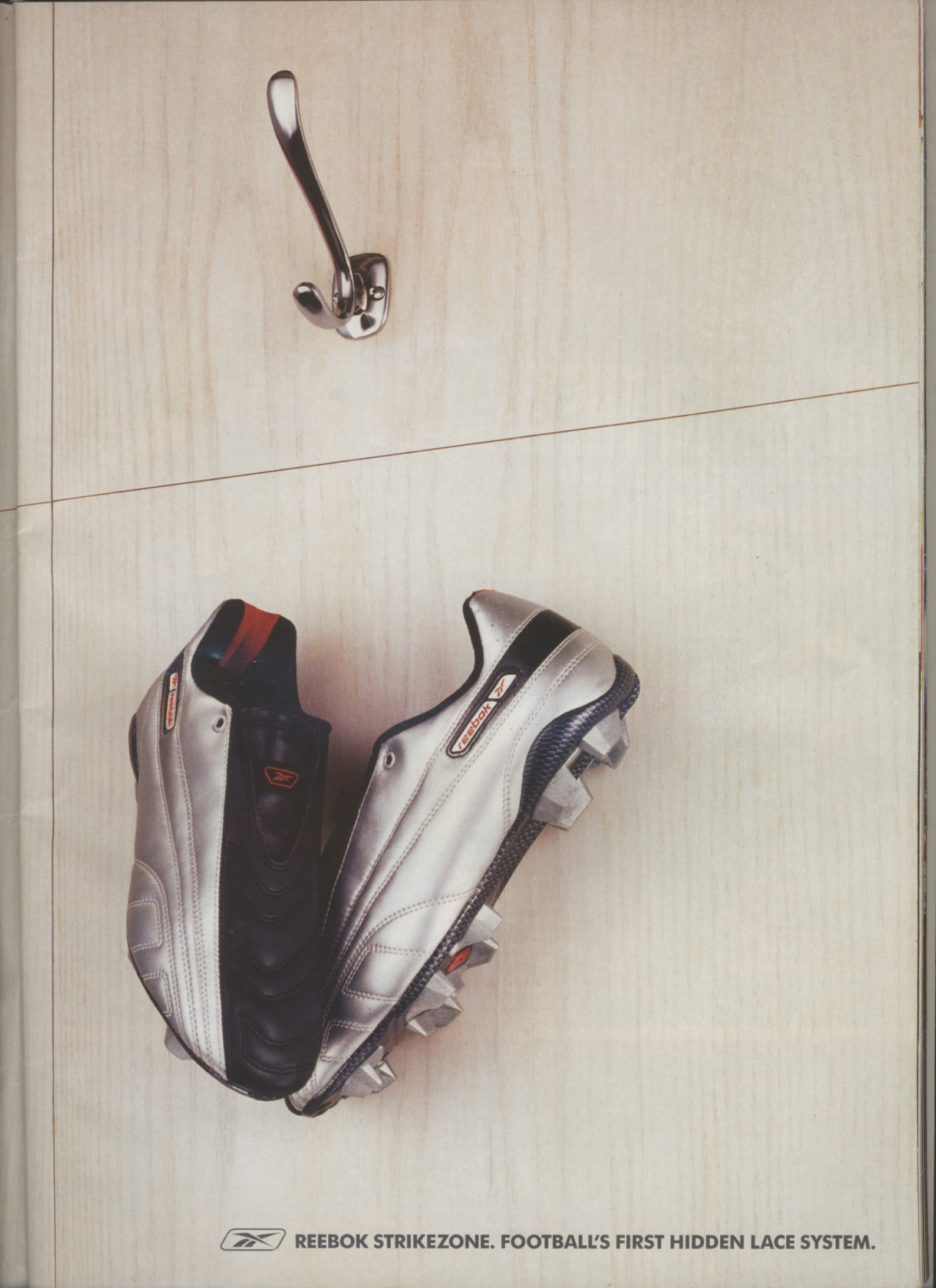
BELLAMY



REEBOK STRIKEZONE. FOOTBALL'S FIRST HIDDEN LACE SYSTEM.

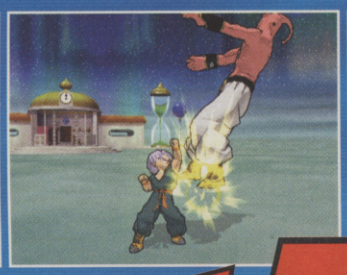
planet cvg

HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

RE-ENTER THE DRAGON

DRAGON BALL Z RETURNS FOR MORE MARTIAL ARTS INSANITY

EXCLUSIVE



Piccolo sends Goku hurtling into a mountainside with the mother of all haymakers

You'll be able to ruck in eight different destructible arenas

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

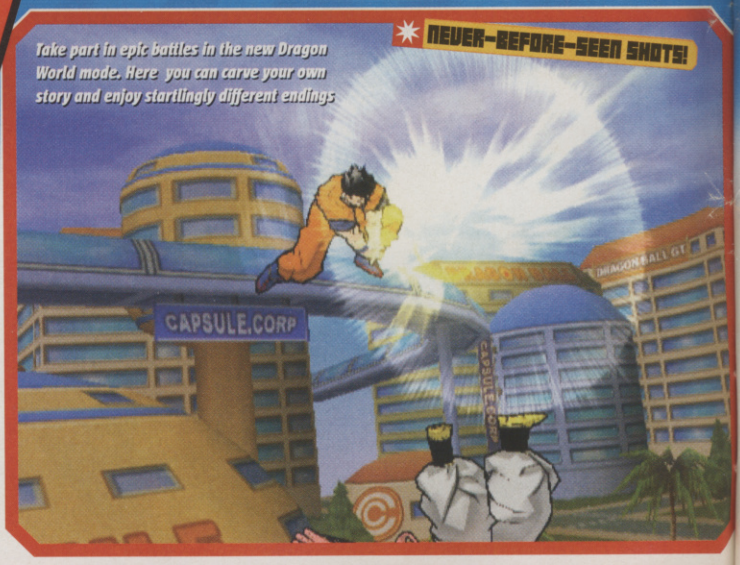
Goku and the crazy Dragon Ball Z cast are warming up for this year's most explosive cartoon rumble. The spiky-haired hero returns exclusively to PS2 on November 14, and Planet CVG has busted its balls to get you the first facts and exclusive screenshots.

If you thought last year's DBZ game captured the excitement of the TV series, wait till you get your hands on this new and improved beat 'em up battle royale. The fights are mental. There are eight destructible environments for you to mash up, and when it kicks off all the explosive special powers, swish effects and blinding new character animations cause the screen to erupt with colourful mayhem.

The most ferocious DBZ warriors ever made are all in here, with a total of 34 making an appearance throughout the game. Again each brawler has their own variety of unique moves and they'll be heaps more to master in this stylish sequel.

NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN SHOTS!

Take part in epic battles in the new Dragon World mode. Here you can carve your own story and enjoy startlingly different endings



the team

SAY HELLO NICELY TO ALL THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THE MAG

Alex Simmons
EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Pro Evo 3
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Advance Wars 2

Fourteen is an important number for our Alex. It's the number of years he's been a games journalist; the number of days it took him to get an import PS2 after it launched in Japan, the number of times he's finished a Metal Gear game... It's also the number of seconds it takes him to pleasure a woman. Allegedly.

Pete Walker
DEP EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- LOTR: Return Of The King
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Viewtiful Joe

Pete's Tribes: Vengeance fixation has entered a new phase. Starting every day by scouring the Net and harassing Vivendi for the latest information, every time he finds a new screenshot he saves it into a special folder on his desktop that he routinely fondles with his cursor, chuckling strangely to himself. And we're a bit worried it's only gonna get worse...

Lee Skittrell
REVIEWS EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Pokemon Ruby
- Jak II
- Buffy 2

Lee's all torn up. He's a mere Poké-ball's throw away from finishing Ruby, but has also just taken delivery of the first four seasons of Buffy on DVD. Like a mad rabbit caught in the bright lights of all that excitement, he forgot who he was, where he lived and failed to turn up to work for four days. At least, that's what he told Alex.

Mike Cooper
NEWS EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Halo
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Pro Evo 3

Still stinging after last month's Challenge CVG battering at Halo, Mike's spent hours every day replaying Halo from scratch in Legendary difficulty "for research on Halo 2." So fearsome are his skills now that no one's dared take him on in multiplayer, forcing him to tour the office like a tramp begging matches off the cannon fodder, er advertising team.

NEWS NUGGETS

UNMISSABLE BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET

PAPER THIN PLUMBER

Mario's dusting off his dungarees for another adventure on Cube. Nintendo has confirmed that a new Paper Mario game is pencilled in for release some time during the first half of 2004.

THIS MONTH'S BEST RUMOUR

Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty is currently in development for GameCube as well as Twin Snakes. It's believed that Silicon Knights is the team working on the sneakathon.

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID 3

SNAKE EATER

KOJIMA REVEALS ALL: NEW FACTS AND KILLER SHOTS!

TURN OVER NOW!

Buu doesn't take kindly to his opponent telling him he looks like a giant testicle

DRAGON BALL BOOTY

We're giving you the chance to blag Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2 as soon as it hits the shelves this November. There are four copies of the game up for grabs!

If that's not enough, we're also offering you the opportunity to win a Dragon Ball Z DVD. We've got two copies of Dragonball Z: Super Saiya Son Goku (on sale now), and two copies of Dragon Ball Z: Super Battle In The World (out on October 13) to give away. Just answer this question to be in with a shot of being one of eight lucky winners.

Which of these is one of Goku's attacks?

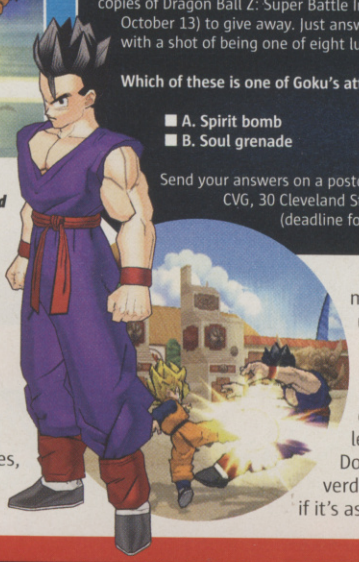
- A. Spirit bomb
- B. Soul grenade

Send your answers on a postcard to Dragon Ball Booty, CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (deadline for entries October 22)

Bzzz-ack! The special attacks in DBZ 2 are even more devastating this time round

Plus now you can absorb enemies and perform Fusion, enabling you to combine fighters. You even get to use bad man Buu, and fight with him in each of his three intimidating forms – Maijin Buu, Kid Buu and Super Buu.

As well as all the cool new combatants and spectacular moves, there's a major new single-player option called Dragon World mode. Here you get to join up with a team of computer-controlled characters and journey on a fierce fighting quest to capture all seven of the legendary Dragon Balls. Don't miss our explosive verdict next issue and find out if it's as good as it sounds... CVG



FIRST CHUNKY DETAILS

THE PHANTOM MENACE

It's out to spook Xbox with its supernatural powers

Infinium Labs has revealed the first facts about its forthcoming console, the Phantom! Here's the shocker. It makes Xbox seem about as powerful as a pocket calculator.

And if that wasn't enough of a threat to Xbox's crown as the heavyweight champ of the console world, the Phantom looks about as heavy as a bus... with a herd of elephants sat on board.

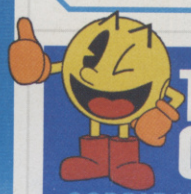
Its 3Ghz processor dwarfs Xbox's measly 733Mhz offering. Add a 100Gb hard disk, Dolby Digital 7.1 Surround Sound and the latest super swish nVidia graphics card and you've got a beast on your hands.

Sounds like a PC! Well it is, kind of. Infinium Labs intends it to be a 'console' dedicated to the online experience, enabling gamers to download PC games on demand. You'll be able to play multiplayer titles over the Net via broadband. However, no matter how impressive this all seems, Infinium Labs is a relatively unknown company. So considering Xbox has got the biggest bank account in the world funding it and the top developers and publishers on its side, the Phantom has got one helluva fight ahead of it when it's released in 2004.

Technically the Phantom outguns Microsoft's monster console in every department

PHANT FACT FLASH

- *Downloadable PC games*
- *Wireless keyboard and mouse*
- *Wireless controller*
- *3Ghz CPU*
- *Dolby Digital 7.1 Surround Sound*
- *100Gb hard disk*
- *Onboard wireless RF modules*
- *10/100 baseT Ethernet*
- *2 USB ports*
- *4 controller ports*
- *Online multiplayer events*



THE ORIGINAL GHOSTBUSTER

GOBBLE UP THE FUN ON GAMECUBE

This month CVG got hands-on with Nintendo's new multiplayer Pac-Man game for GameCube, and it's wicked.

It's back to basics, with all the pill-guzzling action taking place in classic mazes. There is a twist though. Three of you play ghosts with a limited view on the GameCube screen, while the fourth player controls the ravenous yella fella on GBA who can see every movement of his spooky hunters. It works brilliantly. Once the player controlling Pac-Man gets caught, the ghost who catches the Pizza-shaped hero takes control of him on GBA.

Nintendo is still to confirm a release date, but CVG guestimates that we won't see hide nor hair of this arcade treat until spring next year at the earliest.

Playing as one of the ghosts is just as thrilling as being Pac-Man

Graeme Boyd
STAFF WRITER
CURRENT FAVES
- Project Gotham 2
- GT4
- Tony Hawk's Underground

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Unless you're Graeme, in which case when in London, try to make London do as his native Scots do. Which might explain why, after a couple of strong shandies one night, he attempted to persuade the entire CVG team to "come to Aberdeen and my Mum will cook you all neeps and tatties." We said no.

Paul Davies
CONTRIBUTING ED
CURRENT FAVES
- Pro Evo 2
- Pokemon Sapphire
- Soulcalibur II

Capcom has Megaman as its long-serving mascot, CVG has Paul. And just like any other cuddly toy, Paul likes nothing better than being stroked and petted by passing PR honeys who think he's cute like a giant teddy. In fact, he enjoys the mascot role so much he's suspected of moonlighting as the guy inside Arsenal's Gunnersaurus suit. There he is!

Jaime Smith
ART EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Pro Evo 3
- F-Zero GX
- Zelda: Wind Waker

Jaime's just about the only person in the UK who's never opened a Harry Potter book, nor played a Potter game or even watched a Potter movie. At PlayStation Experience he refused to even look at Quidditch. "It'll never hold any interest for me," he vowed. Until EA and Konami announce Potter PES12... We're pretending it might happen just to torture him.

Jenny McComb
SENIOR DESIGNER
CURRENT FAVES
- Gregory Horror
- Voodoo Vince
- Billy Hatcher

This issue a reader wrote in to tell CVG that he likes the look of Jenny and could we please have her as our centrefold poster. Double-sided, no less. Well how would you feel? Kind of flattered at the attention of a tad worried you have a stalker in the making? Jenny has taken to carrying a huge stick when she walks up the road, to beat away all the men following her.

Roseanna Negrotti
ACTING PROD ED
CURRENT FAVES
- Project Gotham 2
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Backyard Wrestling

There are no flies on this Rose. She's taken to the subbing dominatrix's hotseat a little too easily, and is already cracking the whip, sending CVG staff scurrying around the office doing her every bidding like frightened mice. She's a regular font of knowledge on employment law too. Did you know that production staff are legally exempt from making the coffee?

F-ZERO ON THE BOX

The super-fast world of F-Zero is being made into a cartoon in Japan. Subtitled 'Legend of the Falcon', it features Capt Falcon battling against corruption in the racing community. Lots of 3D race sequences are promised.

THE MARIO'S WORST RUMOUR

Whispers reach us that, disappointed by recent Mario sales, Nintendo's packing the chubby sink-fixer off for a long break. Needless to say, Mario isn't being permanently retired.

XBOX BARGAIN HUNT

Budget distributor Phoenix Games has announced a range of Xbox games at the cheap as chips price of £9.99. The first couple are called Drug Wars and Crime Control. David would be proud.

Hot or Not?

MANHUNT

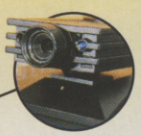
We're still getting sick kicks from Vice City, but all anyone is talking about is Manhunt. Rockstar's all-new ultra violent nightmare will be bloodying UK shelves this October. It's going to be a gloriously gory Christmas.

SEGA BICYCLE

You can only get one in Japan, but this fold-up Sega branded bike makes the top ten in CVG's Christmas wish list. If you have the means and the ways, you can pick one up for around 130 smackers. We definitely wouldn't say no...

DONKEY KONGA

GameCube owners have been waiting yonks for a proper new Donkey Kong game, and what's the best Nintendo can come up with? Donkey Konga! A rhythm action farce that'll see you tapping out beats using a bongo peripheral.



EYE TOY: PLAY

Cleaning imaginary windows and karate chopping thin air! Everybody's going ape for Eye Toy, and it's selling like icepops in a heatwave. It's a giant slayer. First it knocked Tomb Raider: The Angel Of Darkness off the top spot in the sales charts, and then it went and shoved Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire into second and third place.

BEYBLADE

It may have taken playgrounds by hurricane-force storm, but the Beyblade PSone game was about as dramatic and devastating as a hamster fart. And it smelt a whole lot worse too.

CRACKED WIDE OPEN

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID 3

SNAKE EATER

HANGING OUT WITH HIDEO KOJIMA

EXCLUSIVE

This month CVG hooked up with Solid Snake's creator for a sneaky chat about Metal Gear Solid 3.

We considered tying him up and torturing him Jack Bauer-style for information. But before we even had a chance to get out the rope and duct tape, Kojima spilled his guts (rather politely and helpfully) about some of the most exciting features in MGS3. Go us!

THE INVISIBLE MAN

There will be extra downloadable content this time round. Kojima wouldn't tell us more than you'll be able to get extra camouflage online. And by the looks of it, choosing the right camo is going to be essential in MGS3, as wearing the wrong kit will make you stick out like a sore thumb.

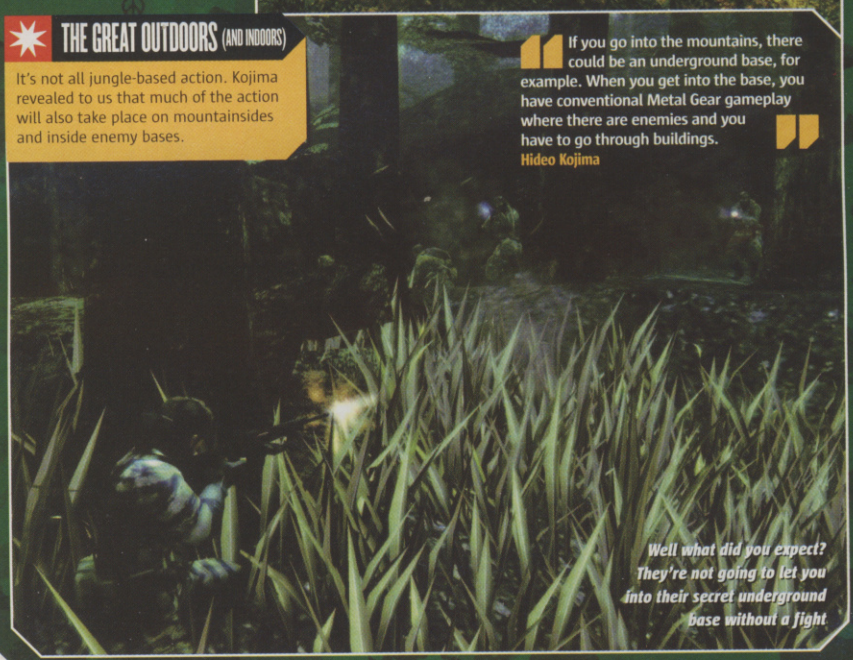
> There are some moments when you can't see Snake
> Hideo Kojima

Select camo that's perfectly suited to your surroundings and disappear

THE GREAT OUTDOORS (AND INDOORS)

It's not all jungle-based action. Kojima revealed to us that much of the action will also take place on mountainsides and inside enemy bases.

> If you go into the mountains, there could be an underground base, for example. When you get into the base, you have conventional Metal Gear gameplay where there are enemies and you have to go through buildings.
> Hideo Kojima

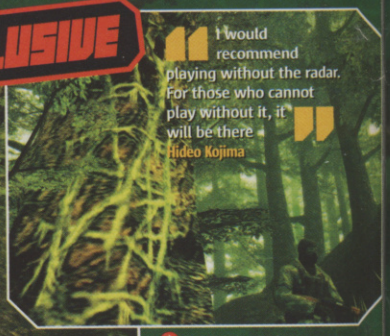


Well what did you expect? They're not going to let you into their secret underground base without a fight

TURNING UP THE TENSION

The radar has gone! Okay, you can switch it on if you want, but Kojima is really hoping that the new structure of Snake Eater's gameplay will encourage gamers to brave it without knowing where all the enemies are. We're game, for sure

> I would recommend playing without the radar. For those who cannot play without it, it will be there
> Hideo Kojima



Although the MGS radar was an innovative visual aid, it stripped a certain amount of adrenalin-fuelled anxiety from the action

EXTRA FACTS

1. **IMPROVED GROUP ENEMY AI:** The patrol and attack formations are far more flexible and realistic
2. **FULL USE OF 5.1 SURROUND SOUND:** Snap a twig with guards nearby and they'll track in on where the noise came from. Shhh!
3. **WEIRD BITS OF ANIMAL CAMO:** You'll come across and be able to use strange items of camouflage like an alligator head, which helps keep you well concealed in water
4. **BROKEN BONES AND ILLNESSES:** Land badly and you'll break a limb. Eat a dodgy animal and it'll make you sick, affecting your abilities

THE NEWS IN PICTURES

THE BANANA BOOGIE

TIMESPLITTERS 3

TimeSplitters developer Free Radical's next game, Second Sight, is being published by Activision not Eidos. TimeSplitters 3 is expected to follow suit. Champ Man creator Sports Interactive has split from Eidos, too.

E-READER SCAN-DAL

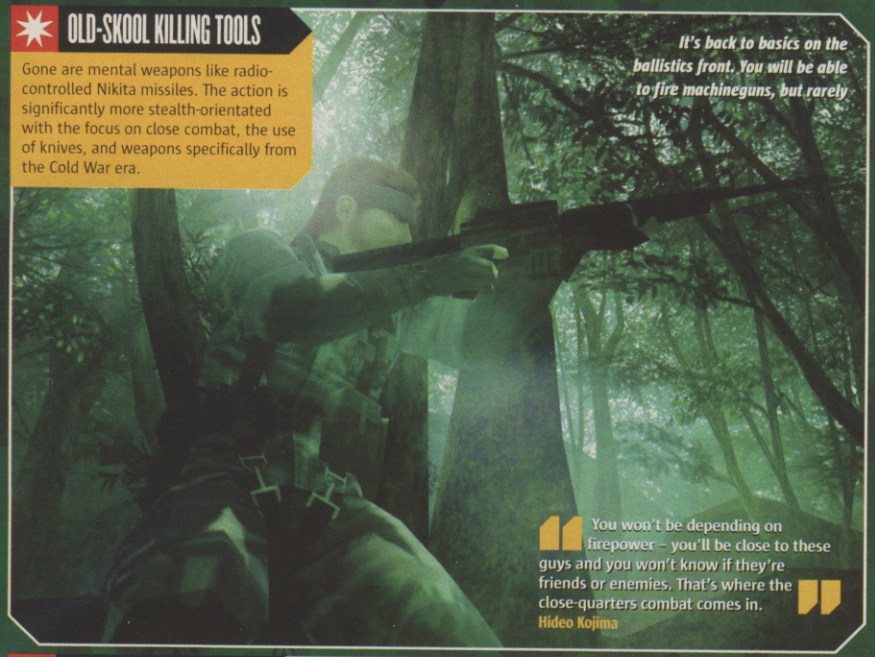
It's doing well in Japan and the States but Nintendo's GBA E-Reader won't be getting a UK release. The device lets you open up game content and play old NES games by scanning cards, and is being given away free with new GBAs in the US.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PIKMIN GONE?

Yep, Captain Olimar and his colourful colleagues have gone missing and aren't expected to reappear until Summer 2004. Nintendo officially announced this new release date for Europe this month.

OLD-SKOOL KILLING TOOLS

Gone are mental weapons like radio-controlled Nikita missiles. The action is significantly more stealth-orientated with the focus on close combat, the use of knives, and weapons specifically from the Cold War era.

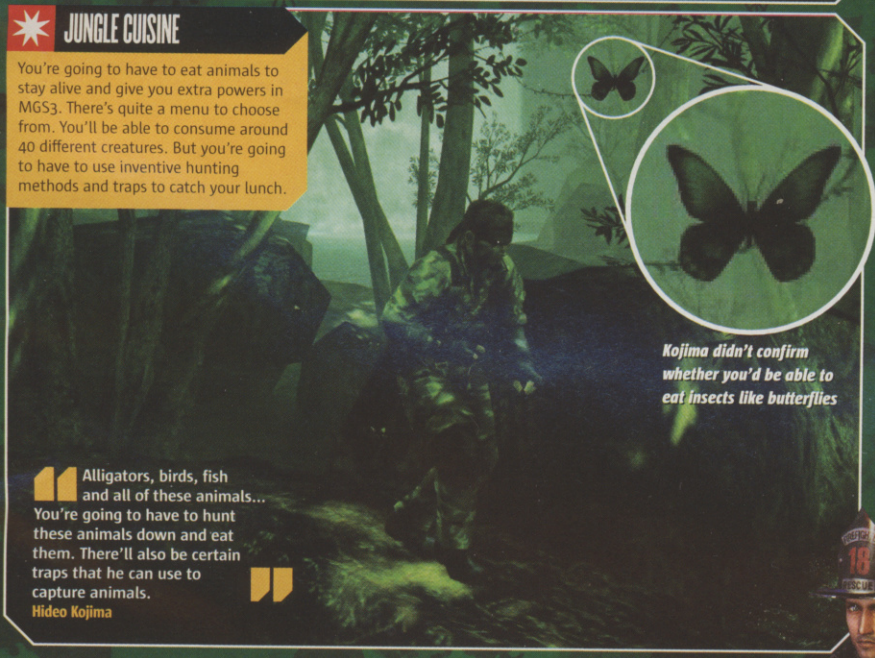


It's back to basics on the ballistics front. You will be able to fire machineguns, but rarely

"You won't be depending on firepower – you'll be close to these guys and you won't know if they're friends or enemies. That's where the close-quarters combat comes in."
Hideo Kojima

JUNGLE CUISINE

You're going to have to eat animals to stay alive and give you extra powers in MGS3. There's quite a menu to choose from. You'll be able to consume around 40 different creatures. But you're going to have to use inventive hunting methods and traps to catch your lunch.



Kojima didn't confirm whether you'd be able to eat insects like butterflies

"Alligators, birds, fish and all of these animals... You're going to have to hunt these animals down and eat them. There'll also be certain traps that he can use to capture animals."
Hideo Kojima

N-COMING ON N-GAGE

Five biggies headed to Nokia's mobile gaming midget

HANDS-ON

■ We gave N-gage Tony Hawk a good grind around the skatepark and the good news is that it feels nice and smooth. The level

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

designs are more like the first two games but there's still plenty of room for flipping off phat tricks. Wireless linkups should be nice.

■ Ubi Soft's fantastic stealth 'em up will be making a sneaky appearance on N-Gage too. It's 2D, viewed from the side like the

SPLINTER CELL

mobile phone version, but the softly-softly gameplay mechanics remain and a new two-player co-op mode sounds very interesting.

■ The big Frenchman's little football game should offer all the kicks you can handle. It's viewed from a Pro-Evo-esque

MARCEL DESAILLY'S PRO SOCCER

grandstand perspective and the visuals look pretty good for the small screen. There are six game modes and wireless two-player.

■ First-person shooter guru John Romero has been giving the N-Gage big licks, so we're eager to see how this port of the PS2

RED FACTION

game plays. The 3D environments do appear to be pretty smooth and the guns look meatier than a quarter pounder with extra meat.

■ THQ's brilliant superbike racing simulator will be providing the road rash on N-Gage. It's got all the things that

MOTO GP

made the console versions solid, like official tracks, bikes and riders, variable weather conditions and ultra-fast action.

ARSON AROUND

THIS FIRE-FIGHTING ROMP IS A SCORCHER

Firemen have all the luck. They've got massive red trucks and the girls always fancy them.

Konami's Firefighter FD: 18 is going to let you have a go. Set in a sprawling metropolis, you play square-jawed firefighter Dean McGregor investigating a series of arson attacks. Looks a bit like a chargrilled Metal Gear, with a similar viewpoint and radar system. Flame effects look red hot and backdrafts, flashovers and chemical explosions are all promised.

There's even a lovely lady who won't be able to resist your smoky charms. It all sparks off next February.

The fires will react realistically, spreading through buildings and blowing stuff up. So check the battery on your smoke alarm

Whip out your hose, get a flow going, and spray it all over the place. The higher you spray, the more girls you'll impress

Illustration: Team Artonomy © Computer And Video Games

"Not only are soldiers your enemy, the natural environment is also fighting against you, including the animals... There are fruits, poisonous snakes, rats – if it's a poisonous snake you might be able to throw it at someone."

Hideo Kojima talks to CVG about Metal Gear Solid 3

COWABUNGA!

Konami has confirmed that the pizza-loving amphibians will be bursting onto PS2, Xbox, GC, PC and GBA next year. Like the arcade game it'll be a side-scrolling beat 'em up, but the cel-shaded Ninja Turtles will look heaps better.

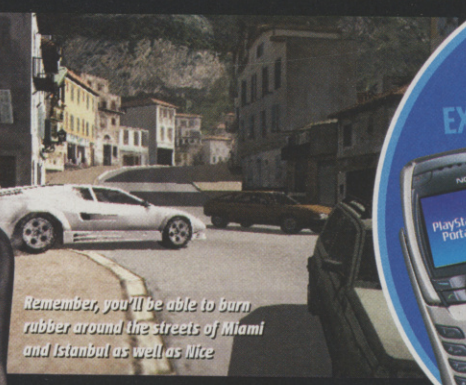
PES3 COMING TO PC

Yep, you read it right. Pro Evo is no longer exclusive to PS2. The world's greatest football game is definitely headed to PC, and will boast improved player models and sharper graphics. It's scheduled for a November debut alongside the PS2 version.

SUITED AND BOOTED

MORE PICS OF DRIVER 3 EMERGE, AND IT'S LOOKING RAZOR SHARP

UPDATE!



Remember, you'll be able to burn rubber around the streets of Miami and Istanbul as well as Nice

Atari has got its lip securely buttoned about Driver 3. No extra nuggets of info have been revealed since we last featured the game in Planet CVG back in April.

Instead, Atari insists on teasing the hell out of us with tantalising new shots of the main man in action, on the sunny streets of Nice in the south of France.

But at least it gives a flavour of what's in store come spring 2004. You'll find yourself tearing around in Lamborghinis, taking on gunmen hidden in the backs of trucks, and going mental with a shotgun.

Admittedly there's nothing here we haven't already seen in the likes of GTA or The Getaway, but CVG has a sneaking suspicion that Atari is keeping its cards close to its chest for a reason. We're banking on it revealing some big surprises and awesome gameplay innovations soon. Don't let us down now.

A dodgy geezer pumps buckshot in your direction. Git!

It's got to be 35° and our man is wearing a suit. He might look cool, but we bet he's got a really sweaty gusset

PSP PERKS

EXCITING NEW ADD-ONS!

Sony's top banana Ken Kutaragi has been blabbing about the up-and-coming PSP to a Japanese newspaper – and it's all good stuff.

We already knew that Sony was planning to make PSP compatible with other hardware, such as PCs and music devices. But Kutaragi has shed more light on a couple of peripherals that we can expect to see released alongside PSP. He stated that there would be camera and mobile phone accessories. How they'll work is anyone's guess right now, but we'll be sure to bring you the full story soon.

GUNS AND GOATEES

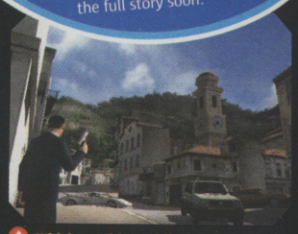
Almost every character in Driver 3 seems to be the proud owner of a shooter and well-groomed facial hair.

Except for that voluptuous girly seen below busy squidging her pistola into the big man's blubber gut. But chin fluff, girls and guns aside, the cutscenes in Driver 3 look blooming marvellous. Talk about atmosphere. Some of these shots look like they've been ripped straight from a super-polished Hollywood action flick. Neither Vice City, The Getaway nor True Crime have movie sequences of this quality.

Deceit, double-crosses and danger. Driver 3 is stuffed to the gills with all three

Only the Remington Fuzz-Away could be responsible for such a crisp mini-beard

"Hand over your lunch money fat boy or I'll pop you like a balloon"



Which would you hijack? The crappy little rust bucket or the ice white Lamborghini? Hmm, that's a tough one

Cocked, locked and loaded. We're expecting some ferocious shootouts this time out. And you got the right car...

SCREENSHOT MELTDOWN

UNREAL 2004

THE ULTIMATE MULTIPLAYER EXPERIENCE

Hop aboard and pilot nippy futuristic aircraft though tons of mammoth new environments

Chew up the dirt in buggies, exploit the huge firepower of tanks and bowl around in hovercrafts

THE X-GAMES

ONLINE SPORTS COMING TO XBOX

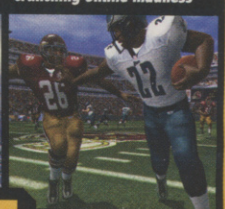
Microsoft has unveiled its new brand of online sports videogaming dubbed XSN – and it's gonna be huge.

XSN enables you to link up Xbox Live with a PC and create your very own online leagues and tournaments for online play. So take a look below at the first games that will support XSN, and get excited.

TOP SPIN: Show 'em the back of your hand online

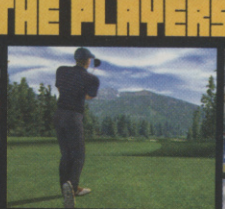
AMPED 2: Extreme mountainside multiplayer fun

NFL FEVER 2004: Bone-crunching online madness

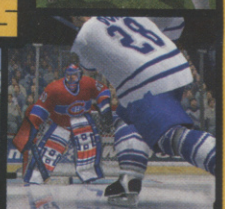


THE PLAYERS

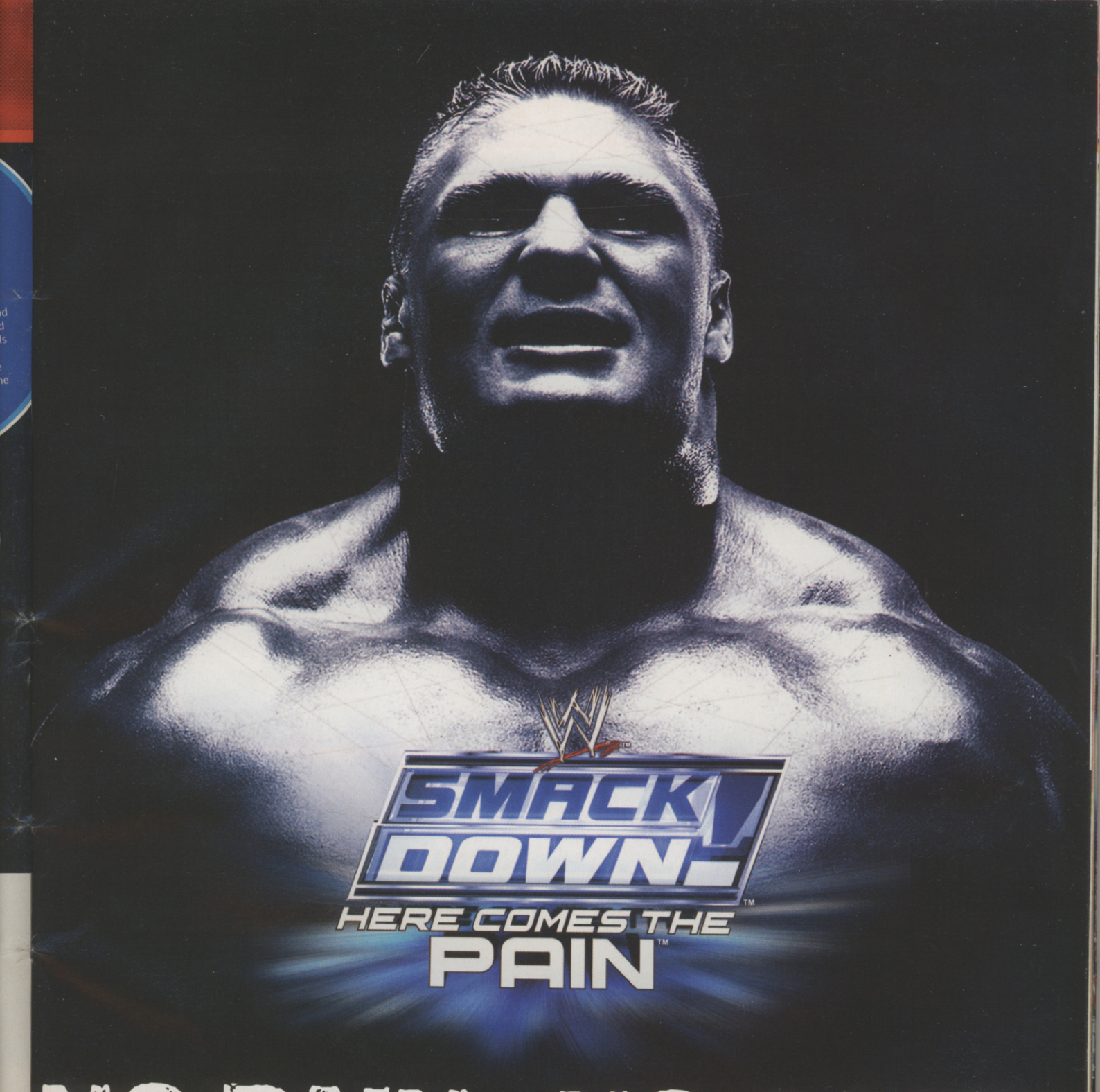
NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2004: Slam-dunk the funk



LINKS 2004: Clubs your balls onto the net



NHL RIVALS 2004: Slippery puck-whacking mania



NO PAIN - NO GAME

FEEL THE PAIN with unique SuperStar abilities. SEE THE PAIN in incredible detail as blood spatters the canvas. BEAT THE PAIN into submission with location specific damage and the best grappling system ever devised. But that ain't all! Bra and Panties matches, blood matches, SuperStar voice overs, enhanced season modes and the most realistic graphics to date mean if you don't get this game you won't be feeling no pain.

Future Media Creations YUKES

World Wrestling Entertainment

PlayStation.2 NOVEMBER 2003

JAKKS Pacific Inc.

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Big Japan in

IN THE FIRST OF A NEW COLUMN, PLANET CVG GOES TO THE MOVIES AND DISCOVERS THE SMALLEST TV DINNER IN THE WORLD

Spirited Away hits UK cinema screens this month. If you've not heard of it before, it's the biggest Japanese film of all time, taking more money at the Japanese box office than Titanic. It also walked away with the Best Animated Feature award at this year's Oscars.

The movie comes from Studio Ghibli, a Japanese animation house that many believe is better than Disney. While Ghibli movies are phenomenally successful in Japan, Spirited Away is the first movie in their history to receive a UK theatrical release, so for many it will be the first chance to see the wealth of ideas that Studio Ghibli is renowned for.

All we can say is go and see this movie – you won't be disappointed

Spirited Away tells the story of Chihiro and the strange spirit world she enters

WATCH AND LEARN

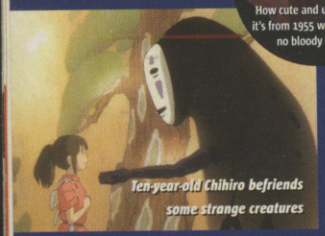
If you manage to catch Spirited Away you may want to track down some other Ghibli movies including My Neighbour Totoro, Porco Rosso and Princess Mononoke. Each has a strong plot, intelligent moral message as well as memorable characters. Watching each of them you'll see why the studio has been inspiring Japanese game developers including Shigeru Miyamoto since the early 80s.

How cute and useful, but if it's from 1955 we bet there's no bloody remote

MINI RETRO

Here's the strangest new gadget we found in Japan this month, a miniature 1950's Japanese living room, complete with a working TV set.

Measuring 20cm tall, the diorama offers a scaled-down replica of a 1955 era telly. Using the latest technology the mini TV actually works, and not just to tune-in to old VHF and UHF signals either. You can hook it up to a video, DVD or even a console to play games. It's priced at just over £100 and makes a definite change from playing on a state-of-the-art 50-inch plasma screen.



Ten-year-old Chihiro befriends some strange creatures

JAPANESE TOP SELLING GAMES

1. Tales Of Symphonia (GC) Namco ..... 193,500 copies
2. Secret Of Mana (GBA) Square-Enix ..... 153,000 copies
3. World Soccer Winning Eleven 7 (PS2) Konami ..... 53,400 copies
4. Winning Post 6 (PS2) Koei ..... 33,900 copies
5. Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles (GC) Square-Enix ..... 20,300 copies

ONE RING FIVE NEW SHOTS

The trilogy is coming to an end, and it looks like EA has definitely saved the best for last. Check out Gandalf and his crew of archer buddies, Golum looking shifty, and all those mental battle sequences.

HANDS-ON EXCLUSIVE

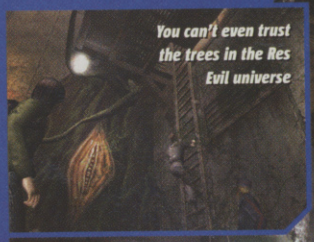
RESIDENT EVIL® OUTBREAK

SAFETY IN NUMBERS? FORGET IT!

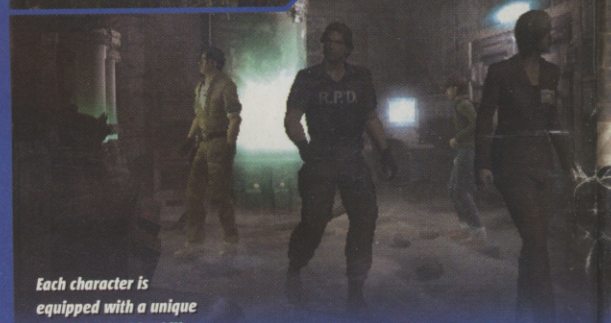
This month CVG had the chance to play Resi Outbreak with the producer of the game and a few mates. Even though it's online and multiplayer, the graphics don't suffer. It looks almost as devilishly handsome as Resident Evil 0.

During our hands-on session it was revealed that there are five different scenarios that are playable online with up to four players. You can also play through the same levels solo and team up with two other AI characters.

The atmosphere is typically chilling and it controls just like before. However, what's new to the seies is the ability to use hand-to-hand combat when you're unarmed. It'll be coming exclusively to PS2 at the end of March 2004.



You can't even trust the trees in the Res Evil universe



Each character is equipped with a unique set of invaluable skills

BE VEWY QUIET... I'M HUNTING MONSTERS

MONSTER HUNTER

FIERCE FIGHTS

There's going to be lots of luscious and varied environments to hunt in

Monsters react to each other, with carnivores savagely attacking their prey

You and three mates can form a hunting party to take down the beasts

YOU'RE ON THE MENU

Not content with unleashing scabby zombies through the phonelines with Resident Evil Outbreak, Capcom Japan has announced that Monster Hunter will be another online game exclusively for PS2.

You'll be able to choose your character's appearance and statistics and enter a world overrun by dragons and dinosaurs, making a living by doing some serious monster-mashing and picking up the bounty.

You can form a guild and establish a base to hang out in between hunts, but keep it well guarded – the monsters are hunting you too! There'll be loads of different species, and they'll all react with individual levels of intelligence and aggression.

Unfortunately there's no word yet as to whether Monster Hunter will reach these shores. More news as it emerges.

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY

The prices of all three next gen consoles are to be slashed within a couple of months. Planet CVG's sources suggest that these are the costs we can expect to enjoy just in time for Crimbo.

PS2 - £129

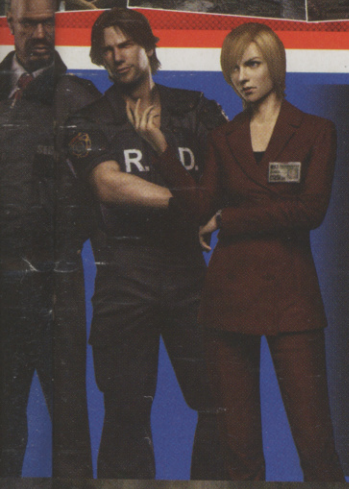
XBOX - £99

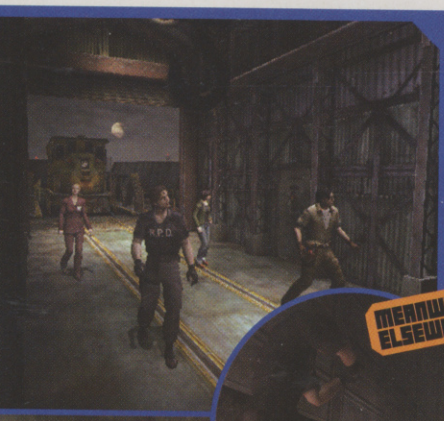
GC - £79

DOOM III

We've played it! Flip for first impressions on the ultimate survival horror shooter. It'll make your blood curdle

TURN OVER NOW!





NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM

Being alone isn't pleasant at the best of times, but when you're in a place crawling with groaning zombies hungry for flesh it's a darned sight worse. In Outbreak you often have to go it alone through certain sections of the game and meet up once you've taken care of business in different areas.

1 Splitting up is unavoidable sometimes. Be sure you learn how to take care of yourself

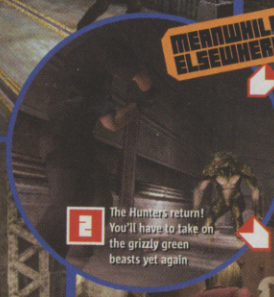
ONCE BITTEN...

If a zombie manages to sink its rancid teeth into your flesh, you'll get infected with a virus. You have to keep the infection level below 100 percent, by avoiding getting bitten too many times and healing yourself whenever possible. Fail to control it and you'll turn into a zombie!

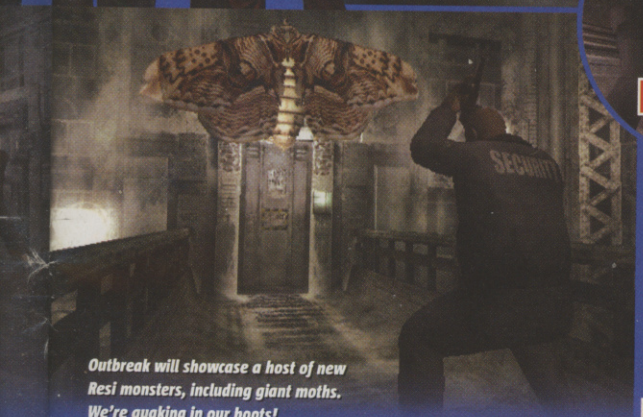
VIRUS METER

Keep a close eye on the virus meter. Once you turn into a zombie there's no going back!

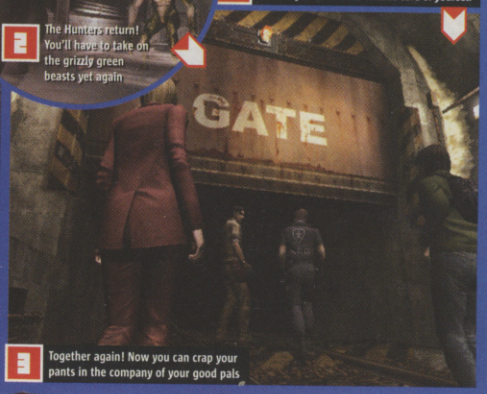
MEANWHILE ELSEWHERE...



2 The Hunters return! You'll have to take on the grizzly green beasts yet again



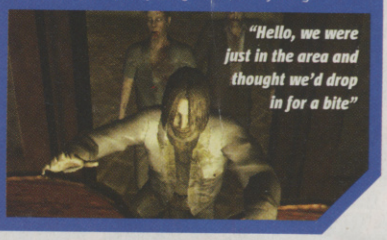
Outbreak will showcase a host of new Resi monsters, including giant moths. We're quaking in our boots!



3 Together again! Now you can crap your pants in the company of your good pals

CAN I KICK IT? YES YOU CAN!

In previous Resi games it's always been about hunting for keys to unlock new areas. However, in Outbreak you don't always need a key. Wooden doors can be beaten down or shot out. Only it takes much longer to break a door down than to unlock it with a key. Plus, if there's a drooling dead person gnawing on your leg it's pretty tough to kick anything.



"Hello, we were just in the area and thought we'd drop in for a bite"

ONE TO WATCH

GORDON GOES MORROWSKI

Imagine Half-Life meets Morrowind. If Stalker lives up to its ambitions, that's what you'll get with THQ's new PC survival-shooter – the open mission structure and massive free-roaming environment of Morrowind, with an eerie, tense atmosphere and sci-fi conspiracy plot that Gordon Freeman would be proud of.

Hired by corporations to recover artefacts from the deserted and irradiated 30 Sq km around the site of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster, you're competing with other Stalkers, military patrols, mutants and strange metaphysical anomalies. Like an RPG, you'll be able to craft experimental equipment and join groupings as you advance, gaining access to unique weapons and missions. Out 2004, an Xbox version and full cooperative mode are also being considered.

Ukraine-based developer GSC's researchers at Chernobyl, wearing the Insta-contraception ™ radiation suits

JOIN THE BIG LEAGUE

If you visit selected GAME stores you'll be able to pick up a fully playable demo of Pro Evolution Soccer 3 for a mere £1.99 when you pre-order a copy of the game. Of course you'll get this cash back when you buy the full game in November.

Buy the demo and you're eligible to apply for the first ever PES3 National League in association with CVG. There are thousands of pounds worth of prizes up for grabs. If you reckon you've got what it takes, sign up now!

MURDOK
Class: Shaman
Race: Troll

>Tetchy Troll seeks adventurous type for Goblin whipping. No time wasters:-(

You can find MURDOK@Snotspit River, Norrath.

A unique EverQuest online experience now available exclusively on PlayStation 2

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HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP
NEWS SPECIAL
FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

PREPARE FOR A JOURNEY TO HELL IN THE ULTIMATE HORROR SHOOTER

Sequels don't come much bigger than Doom III, the hellish first-person shooter from the lads that invented the genre.

Due on PC and Xbox in 2004, it's already shaping up to be one of the most terrifying and best-looking games of all time, and we've managed to blag an exclusive early play.

We always knew that Doom III was going to look incredible – that much was given. What we didn't know is that it's also going to be the most bed-wetting horror game of all time, out-spooking the rest with its superbly hellish environments and relentless array of monsters. We've had a behind-the-scenes peek at Doom III's huge solo campaign this month and rest assured, it's going to leave you reeling.

NERVE-JANGLING

The key word in Doom III is atmosphere. The gameplay is familiar enough – creatures of hell have been unleashed on a Martian research base, and it's up to you to shoot them in the face until they stop moving. The graphics on the other hand, are like no game you've ever seen. The dense shadows dancing across the walls, the amazingly fluid animation, the incredible level of detail – it's no wonder other first-person shooters are flapping their hands in terror. Doom III is *the* FPS daddy.

In one sequence you have to protect a scientist as he makes his way through a pitch-black level, only his wavering, failing light to guide you. Imps and demons emerge in bloodthirsty waves from the shadows, shocking you with the ferocity of their attacks. It's the concentrated terror of moments like these that really bring the reality home. Doom III is shaping up to be the ultimate survival horror game and we simply cannot wait.

The revival of 80s fashions meant the return of the shoulder pad. Green laser eyes are optional, though

"Dave, is that you? You look different somehow. New haircut? Lost a little weight?"

To rule this deathmatch map, you need the 30x-damage power-up hidden beneath the laser cannon. But try and avoid the beam!

WE'RE ALL DOOMED

Four-way online deathmatches get go-ahead!

As well as the brutal solo campaign, Doom III is set to have full multiplayer online action, with up to four players hammering it out in free-for-all deathmatches, two-on-two team matches and harrowing one-on-one duels. And that's just for starters.

We scored a look at the multiplayer action this month, taking on the developers in a brutal four-way deathmatch and coming away scarred.

The action is paced slower than we expected, probably a little slower than Halo, but with the claustrophobic corridors and insanely spooky shadows, it's a whole lot more intense.

Fans of the previous games will be right at home – the weapon set hasn't changed much, and all your favourites are in place ranging from the chainsaw and shotgun through to the rocket launcher and almighty BFG. It seems a shame that the game only supports up to four players, but from what we've seen this is only going to condense the action into an even more ferocious and punishing experience. Doom III is shaping up to be the most intense and gory FPS you've ever seen. Expect further online updates as we get them.

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GET THEM BEFORE THEY GET YOU!

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HIT

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DOGGY STYLE

Booty-lovin' rap daddy Snoop Dogg is recording an all-new original track for True Crime: Streets Of LA. Over 50 original tunes from top hip hop artists like Ice Cube and Bad Azz will also be in there.

TIF THIS IS FOOTBALL 2004

Sony's very own footie game is now set for release just before Christmas. It'll be fully playable online and will feature over 18,000 players, 900 teams and 23 leagues.

STOP PRESS

PLAYSTATION 3

It's official. Sony has confirmed that PS3 will be fully backward-compatible. Not only will you be able to play PS2 games on it, you can use it to play all your old PSone discs on it too!

KILLER CURVES

NICE BUTT, AND THE ONE ON HER PISTOL

ROGUE OPS

COMING TO XBOX, PS2 & GC

When you first see Rogue Ops up and running it looks just like Metal Gear, except the lead character is a girl called Nikki with one of the peachiest butts in the business. However, her ripe rump isn't the only attractive thing about this stealthy shindig.

Rogue Ops uses a cool new stealth combat system. When you creep up on an enemy from behind a special danger icon appears, which has three different alert colours ranging from relatively safe (green) to extremely dangerous (red). If you choose to attack the enemy when the meter is green you have to perform a super-long random combo that appears on the screen the moment you press the assault button. And it's time-sensitive! So you have to complete the combo in a flash, much like in the Shenmue games, or the enemy will detect your presence.

If you're more daring and can get close enough to your prey so that the danger meter turns red, the combo you have to perform is far shorter and easier to nail. This adds an exciting twist to the otherwise standard affair of shooting foes with a silenced pistol and dragging them into the shadows.

It's not all about killing, though. It's often wise to keep an enemy alive so as not to draw attention to yourself, pickpocketing them for vital equipment and information instead.

Kemco is publishing this sexy sneak 'em up, and it's expected to creep onto UK shelves on December 5. Stay tuned for more on Nikki and her delightful derrière next issue.

Karaoke Stage

First look

THINK YOU CAN SING? YOU'RE 'AVING A LAUGH

This is what we're talking about. Full-on karaoke-fuelled madness in the comfort of your own home!

Karaoke Stage is coming exclusively to PS2 early next year. Once you've invited some mates round, slip on the headset and embarrass yourself with a wailing rendition of The Power Of Love, and then pass the gauntlet onto one of your cackling amigos to see if they can do any better.

Like most rhythm action games it's all in the timing. You've got to sing certain words for specific lengths, much like, well, singing. Anyway, we've played it (badly) and it's a blast. We'll be bringing you more on Konami's sing-along over the coming months.

Work your way through the single-player Career mode in search of pop stardom

TRIBES: VENGEANCE

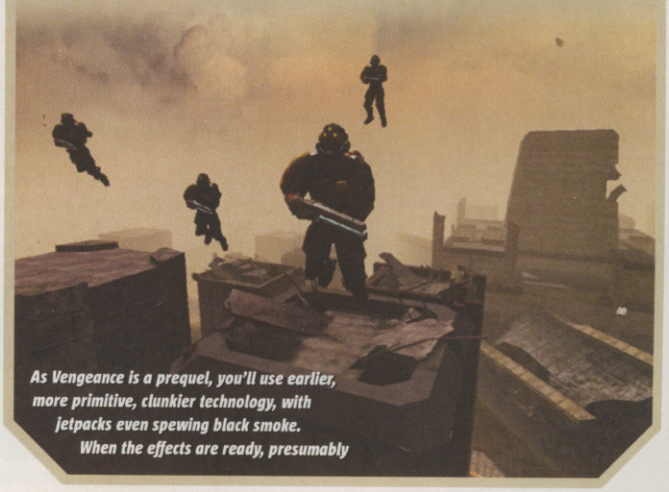
TRIBES: IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

UPDATE!

For a videogame narrative to remind us of one of our favourite movies sounds cool. To be reminded of two smacks of genius in the making.

As Irrational's Ken Levine explains, "Why do all games follow a straight beginning, middle and end chronology? We thought about movies like Pulp Fiction, where the camera tells the story as it wants to be told – going between different people, different times and different places." A bit like the De Niro classic Once Upon A Time in America.

"We focus on one family whose story spans 20 years, with the narrative going back and forth in time. Within this you play as six or seven different characters." Roll on 2004.



As Vengeance is a prequel, you'll use earlier, more primitive, clunkier technology, with jetpacks even spewing black smoke. When the effects are ready, presumably

Playtime Bullies

FIGHTING FOR SPACE ON THE OFFICE CONSOLE THIS MONTH

PS2 MOST PLAYED!

WINNING ELEVEN 7

Lunchtimes just wouldn't be lunchtimes without a game or two. Only problem is that two matches are never enough. That might account for the recent trend of lunch starting at 10.30am and finishing at 5.30pm.

XBOX MOST PLAYED!

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

We all love it, but it's taken over Alex's life. He's even started dressing up like a Jedi. He almost lost a testicle during a lightsaber demonstration using a mop, but that's just part of the danger of being a Jedi, he says...

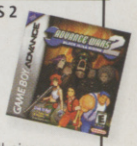
CUBE MOST PLAYED!

F-ZERO GX

Most of us had to pay at least one visit to the local eye clinic this month. Our lunchtimes have been spent caning the multiplayer where blinking simply isn't an option. Lee is now completely cross-eyed and keeps walking into doors.

GBA MOST PLAYED!

ADVANCE WARS 2



A man's link cable is sacred, and should be hidden away from thieving hands. Pinch Jaime's and he'll give you a nipple twist so hard that you'll weep for a week. See, no link cable means no four-way battle action! And that just won't do. No sir.

PC MOST PLAYED!

WOLFENSTEIN: ENEMY TERRITORY

Pete insists on plugging every member of the CVG team with at least a dozen headshots before we're allowed to go home. We're not sure what that's about, but we'd be lying if we said we didn't all love it... Okay, we're lying.

the HOT SEAT

Atsushi Inaba, producer of Viewtiful Joe blabs openly about his latest lunatic masterpiece and spills the beans on 2D gaming

CVG: Where did the idea for Viewtiful Joe come from?

Atsushi: *A long time ago, in the 60s and 70s there were a lot of costume superhero shows. Basically this is where Joe comes from, but we also blended in typical American comic book heroes as well. So it's a blending of both cultures.*

CVG: Do you think that there's still a lot of room for game development within the much-neglected 2D genre?

Atsushi: *Up until now we've played a lot of 2D games in the Nintendo and Super Nintendo era. We've seen it all and we've done it all with 2D. It's going to be hard to bring out new games that are original and fun. However with Viewtiful Joe we think we've been able to breath new life into the genre because we use it in a new, stylistic way that hasn't been used before. It would be possible for more 2D games to come out, but it's all going to depend on how imaginative the creators of the games can actually be.*

CVG: During the development process did you ever consider putting in a multiplayer option?

Atsushi: *Yeah, we did think about it of course, but then when we realised the type of game it was, we realised it wouldn't have fit.*

CVG: What's your favourite thing about the game?

Atsushi: *Of course I like the graphics and everything, but my favourite thing is that it's a game that you can watch people playing and yet it's still fun. You could be playing it, I could be watching, and I'd still have a good time watching you play. It's so cool to look at.*

CVG: Many games at the moment are very similar in terms of looks and gameplay. How do you feel about that?

Atsushi: *There are no games out there right now that interest me, because they all seem the same. So I was really happy to get the chance to produce a game like Viewtiful Joe that actually did seem fresh and new.*

CVG: Was it a real challenge making the combat look chaotic while still keeping it easy to control?

Atsushi: *If you're just going to make a regular action game with punching and kicking it would simply be the same old thing over and over again. So we really had to put a lot of effort into implementing the VFX abilities. Implementing the Slow, the Mach Speed and the Zoom to a point where it's actually fun to play – that was tough, yeah.*

CVG: Are you ever worried that people will think you're a bit strange for making games like Viewtiful Joe and Steel Battalion?

Atsushi: *I don't really care if people think I'm strange or crazy. I like making fun, original and unique games. If that means that I'm going to be labelled as a crazy weird creator, label me.*

> *"I DON'T REALLY CARE IF PEOPLE THINK I'M CRAZY. I LIKE MAKING FUN GAMES"*

What's your opinion on sequels?

Atsushi: *With the first game there are some things that we couldn't get in, that we wanted to put in. So we still have this feeling that it's not 100 per cent. So we want to try making a sequel, eventually. That's not official! However as you guys know, once you make a sequel you make another sequel, another sequel, and another one until you have tons of sequels – and that makes me yawn. I don't want to keep doing sequels – that's boring to me. I'd rather do something new.*

Viewtiful Joe blends frantic gameplay and cel-shading to blistering effect

RAZOR BLADES AT THE READY

Despite being about as much fun as catching your old fella in your zipper, Beyblade spins its way into second place on this month's sales chart just behind Eye Toy.

2 ™ Half-Life 2 has slipped from September 30 to some time in November. It's also expected that three different versions of the game will go on sale, each priced accordingly. One version is believed to be the single-player game, another to feature all the multiplayer modes and the third to be a deluxe edition.

BLACK TO THE FUTURE

DEATH, DECEPTION AND LOADSA DOSH IN VIVENDI'S BLACK9

The future's coming – and it doesn't look good. Black9 is set in 2080 and the fate of mankind is being decided by a titanic struggle between nine elite factions.

But hey, you've got to make a living. You play a mercenary cashing in on the situation, making a quick buck by pimping your ass-kicking skills to the highest bidder.

Black9 is more complex than that though. It's concentrating as much on RPG-style character development as blasting the snot out of stuff.

Thankfully, this melding of genres isn't just a token gesture. You'll be able to develop your character's skills, purchase high-tech weaponry and hone your body with cybernetic upgrades.

You'll also have complete control over your character's speciality. Do you want to be a roughneck assault trooper with the biggest guns on the block? Or will you use stealth and deception to achieve your goals?

And as the conflict escalates your choices and the narrative will force you to make hard decisions about where your allegiances actually lie.

It sounds like a great concept and it's presented in a slick third-person viewpoint with more than a hint of the old Halo about it.

Black9 will be appearing on PC, PS2 and Xbox and you'll be able to join the fray later this autumn.

FACTION-PACKED

Since Black9 has nine different forces battling each other, there's heaps of scope for plenty of cool close encounters.

1 Aliens: The aliens are huge and could crush your nads with their pinkies. Erk!

2 Robots: Massive ED-209-style mechs with spindly legs and gigantic guns... Don't even think about it. Run!

3 Humans: The good old humans are struggling just to bring home the bacon. You can decide to join any of these factions or change sides when it suits you best.

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

Konami has confirmed that Gradius V will be coming to PS2 in Europe. The next gen hardcore shooter will feature horizontally scrolling action, but all the ships and enemies will be modelled in 3D. It's out in 2004.

Pop Idol

Dr Fox hosted last month's PlayStation Experience at Earls Court, where Pop Idol on PS2 was one of the major hits. Queues of kids lined up to take the stage and show their skills on the big screen. It's looking good and is bound to be a Christmas smash. Don't miss our full playtest next issue.

GOLDEN JOYSTICKS 2003

It's that time of year again when you get the chance to have your say on what you reckon are this year's best games. Simply log onto www.goldenjoysticks.co.uk to cast your vote.

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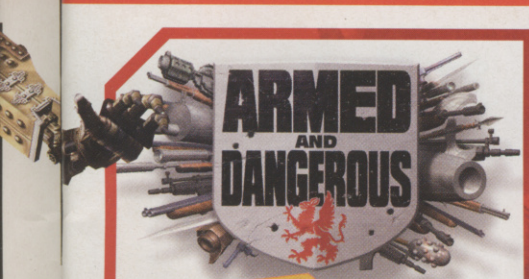

ALL-NEW SCREENS

ROMAN: TOTAL WAR

Your frozen buddy needs saving from the icy weather. Do you a) give him your jacket; b) cuddle up for body warmth; or c) stick him head-first up a dinosaur's arse? Take a wild guess. And if that's how Armed & Dangerous' hero Roman and sidekicks treat their friends, you don't want to be their enemy.

LucasArts' third-person carnage fest is a tongue-in-cheek affair – imagine an unholy hybrid of Brute Force with Sam & Max humour. This explosive third-person shooter's large, sprawling levels are packed with destructible buildings and power-ups such as jetpacks that open up new areas and tactics.

You'll switch between offensive and defensive missions too, blowing up peasants' hovels on foot in one level, then manning a moving gun position to save a base from assaulting grunts in the next. It's a real blast – out on Xbox and PC in February.

FRYING TONIGHT!

Did we mention the explosions? There's plenty. Huge ones. All the time.

FIRE IN THE HOLD!

The biggest Muzzle Flash Ever award goes to Roman, the show-off!

FISH FOOD!

Land sharks – one of the many real-life weapons in your arsenal. Mmm. Tasty.

EA SPORTS FIFA SOCCER 2004

FIFA 2004 ON GBA!

We all like to play with the balls in our pocket. That's if they're footballs and they're on our GBA, of course.

Sensing this desire, EA is bringing out the latest instalment in its FIFA series for Nintendo's handheld. Expected to feature FIFA's unique blend of gameplay, it looks set to be a smash. EA has also confirmed that it will be taking advantage of the GameCube/GBA connectivity, with Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto on hand as a design consultant.

As usual, all the teams and players are fully licensed

No info yet on what features will make the GBA version

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32413 Cheeky Girls, Cheeky Holiday
32425 Lumidee, Never Leave You
32419 Pharrell ft. Method, Frontin'
32373 R.William, Something Beautiful
32564 Jason Nevins, I'm In Heaven
31254 Beyonce. JayZ, Crazy In Love
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32496 The Cardigans, The Storm
32421 Macy Gray, She Aint Right...
32402 Madonna, Frozen
32399 Dido, Take My Hand

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23268 Star Wars
23269 Terminator Theme
25198 Top Gun

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23008 Dj Quicksilver, Bellissima
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23011 Energy 52, Cafe Del Mar
23014 I.Van Dhl, Castles In Sky
23016 Jakata ft. Seal, My Vision
23024 N-Trance, Set U Free
23029 Royksop, Poor Leno
23030 Rui Da Silva, Touch Me
23032 Scooter, Posse
23033 Spiller, Groovejet
23034 Sprmen Lovers, Starlight
23035 Underworld, Bom Slippy
23037 W.D.F., Shiny Disco Balls

GAME TONES - Mono Only

13198 Afterburner
13162 BombJack
13243 Boulderdash
13205 Bubble Bobble
13097 Donkey Kong
13168 Ghosts n Goblins
13221 Golden Axe
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Chart Attack

CVG MOST WANTED

1. KILLZONE (PS2)

Mike: "It looks every bit as amazing as Halo 2, but grittier! I'm certain it's going to become a global superstar. Plus it's online!"

2. MANHUNT (PS2)

Alex: "Any game where you can suck the life out of enemies using only a plastic bag sounds right up our street."

3. HALO 2 (XBOX)

Graeme: "Next year is going to be a stunner for shooter fans, but you're going to need an Xbox for the ultimate blaster."

4. HALF-LIFE 2 (PC)

Pete: "Every time I see it, I'm even more blown away. Never mind game of the year, this could be game of the century!"

5. PRINCE OF PERSIA (PS2, PC)

Lee: "Swinging like a monkey, fighting like a gladiator – this game is *all* of my fantasies rolled into one. Dribble."

READER'S MOST WANTED

He's as big as a bus. André 'The Giant' Mcleod lets us in on the five games he's most itching to play.

1. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 (PS2)
"Like a tank demolishing everything that dares stray in its path."

2. MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH (GC)
"The original thrashes the pretenders to its throne."

3. DOOM 3 (PC)
"Blood, guts and that's only the fight for the keyboard."

4. ALIAS (PS2)
"Ms Bristow can whip my behind any day she likes."

5. KNIGHTS OF HONOR (PC)
"A twinkle in the eyes of the developers – this one's got so much potential it's not true."

Send CVG a photo of yourself and list of five games you're most excited about playing, plus 10 words on each telling us why.
READER'S MOST WANTED, CVG, DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD., 30 CLEVELAND STREET, LONDON, W1T 4JD. EMAIL: MAILBAG.CVG@DENNIS.CO.UK (SUBJECT: READER'S MOST WANTED)

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1	EyeToy: Play	PS2
2	FIFA 2003	PS2, XB, GC, PC, PS
3	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	PS2, XB
4	Beyblade: Let It Rip	PS
5	LOTR: The Two Towers	PS2, XB, GC, GBA
6	Tomb Raider: AOD	PS2, PC
7	Pokémon Sapphire	GBA
8	The Great Escape	PS2, XB
9	Pokémon Ruby	GBA
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PC	ESCHELON 2: WIND WARRIORS	SEP 26
GBA, GC	STARSKY & HUTCH	SEP 26
PS2, XBOX, GC, PC	MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER	SEP 26
XBOX, PS2, GC	SOUL CALIBUR II	SEP 26
GBA	KIRBY: NIGHTMARE IN DREAMLAND	SEP 26
XBOX	WALLACE AND GROMIT	SEP 26
PC, XBOX	DRAGON'S LAIR 3D	SEP 26
XBOX, PS2	RUN LIKE HELL	SEP 26
XBOX, GC	GLADIUS	SEP 26
PS2	YU-GI-OH! DUELIST OF THE ROSES	SEP 26
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XBOX	GROUP S CHALLENGE	SEP 26
XBOX	CURSE: THE EYE OF ISIS	SEP 26
PS2	THE HOBBIT	SEP 26
XBOX, GC, PC, GBA, PS2	FINDING NEMO	SEP 26
PC	HOMEWORLD 2	SEP 26
PC, PS2	WARHAMMER 40,000: FIREWARRIOR	SEP 26
XBOX, PC, PS2, GC	TIGER WOODS 2004	SEP 26
XBOX	DISNEY'S HAUNTED MANSION	SEP 26
PC	SIM CITY: RUSH HOUR EXPANSION PACK	SEP 26
XBOX, PS2, PC, GC	NHL 2004	SEP 26
PC	SPACE COLONY	SEP 26
PC	MASSIVE ASSAULT	SEP 26
PS2	FREEDOM: SOLDIERS OF LIBERTY	SEP 26
PC	TIME OF DEFIANCE	SEP 26
PC	COMMAND & CONQUER GENERALS ZERO HOUR	SEP 26
PS2	AMPLITUDE	SEP 26
PS2	EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES	SEP 26
PC	QUAD ASSAULT: WEST FRONT	SEP 26
GBA	DUAL BLADES	SEP 29
PC	HALF-LIFE 2	SEP 20
PC	SOLDNER - SECRET WARS	OCT
PC	POP IDOL	OCT 1
PC	EMPIRES: DAWN OF THE MODERN WORLD	OCT 1
PC	AGE OF MYTHOLOGY: THE TITANS	OCT
PC	YU-GI-OH! POWER OF CHAOS 1	OCT 1
PC	YU-GI-OH! POWER OF CHAOS 2	OCT 1
PC	YU-GI-OH! POWER OF CHAOS 3	OCT 1
PC	MAX PAYNE: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE	OCT 1
PC	TUROK EVOLUTION	OCT 1
PC	SPELL FORCE	OCT 1
PC	NEVERWINTER NIGHTS ADD-ON 2	OCT 1
GBA	NEED FOR SPEED: PORSCHE UNLEASHED	OCT 3
PS2, GBA	ROBOCOP	OCT 3
PS2	CURSE	OCT 3
PC	LOCK ON: MODERN AIR COMBAT	OCT 3
GC	WALLACE & GROMIT	OCT 3
PS2	TEMPLAR	OCT 3
XBOX	URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER	OCT 3
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GC	WWE WRESTLEMANIA X9	OCT 3
XBOX	TETRIS ONLINE	OCT 3
PC	RAVEN SHIELD: ATHENA SWORD ADD-ON	OCT 3
PC	MEDAL OF HONOR ALLIED ASSAULT: BREAKTHROUGH	OCT 3
GC	DROME RACERS	OCT 10
PC	HALO	OCT 10
PS2	BARBARIAN	OCT 10
PS2	EVOLUTION SNOWCROSS	OCT 10
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PC	X2: THE THREAT	OCT 10
PC	NBA LIVE 2004	OCT 10
GC, XBOX, PC	BIONCILE: THE GAME	OCT 10
PC	NO MAN'S LAND	OCT 17
GBA	SUPER MARIO BROS 3: SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4	OCT 17
GBA, XBOX	BARBARIAN	OCT 17
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PC, GC	FIFA 2004	OCT 17
XBOX, PS2	NBA LIVE 2004	OCT 17
PS2	BIONCILE: THE GAME	OCT 17
PS2	MEGAMAN X7	OCT 17
GBA	FINAL FANTASY TACTICS	OCT 24
GC	BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS	OCT 24
PS2, XBOX	SSX3	OCT 24
GC	F-ZERO GX	OCT 31
PC	COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO	OCT 31
PS1, PS2 XBOX, GBA	FIFA 2004	OCT 31
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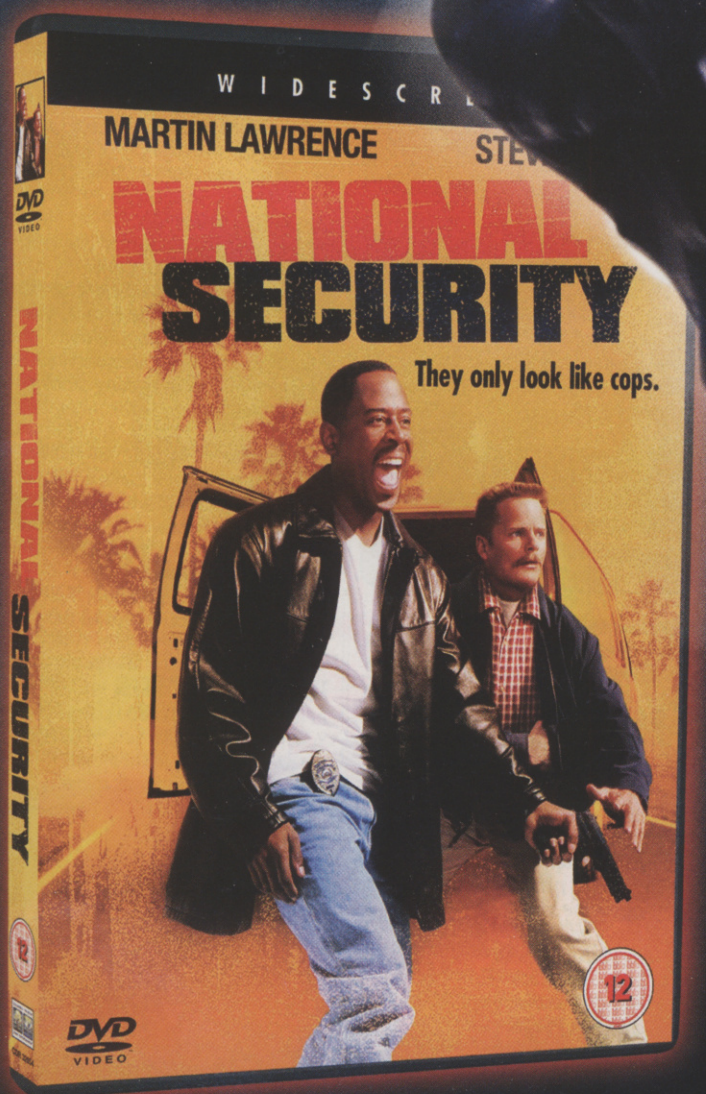

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Revealed: the secret of attracting more female gamers

SCHIZO TENDENCIES

I don't think Nintendo will reveal any further details about Mario 128 before its release, so to find out whether it's any good or not, you'll have to go and buy it. However, knowing Nintendo, I'm confident Mario 128 will be brilliant and well worth the wait.

Devraj, Dorset

CVG *Not that you're biased or prejudging it in any way.*

GAME GIRLS

Why are Game Boys called Game Boys? This is very sexist. They're not just for boys. Girls should have equal rights. Bring on the Game Girls.

Abbie, Shrewsbury

SCHLOCK HORROR

Was 'Rex Nebula And The Cosmic Gender Blender' (Issue 263 Mailbag) inspired by The Rocky Horror Show? If they released a game called that now, I'd buy it based on the title alone.

Dr Frank N Furter

HALO RELOADED

I was talking with a friend of mine and the subject of a Halo movie came up. We agreed that Vin Diesel would fit the profile and make an excellent Master Chief. But then we thought we don't actually know if Master Chief is black or white. If he was black, we thought Wesley Snipes would be a praiseworthy choice. What are your thoughts?

Adam Smith, Essex

CVG *Or maybe it's a butch girl super-soldier, in which case we'd go for Carrie-Anne Moss (The Matrix Reloaded's Trinity) or Grace Jones (A View To A Kill's May Day). She may be getting on a bit for Bond movies, but she could still kick Halle Berry's butt in a bare knuckle fight.*

GRAND THEFT MORE-TO

All I want to know is will the next GTA be on PS2 or PS3?

Lloyd, County Down

CVG *We reckon Rockstar'll squeeze one more out on PS2, though you can imagine the kind of juicy bonuses they'll have been promised to have a brand new GTA game ready for PS3's launch line-up. Or Xbox 2's for that matter.*

GUEST LETTER

More strange debris drifting into CVG's straining Mailbag

WHACKED OUT

Me and my crew wuz wondering if you'd like to fly by my crib because it's so whack. What's that? My crib's not whack? Stand back cuz I'm going to bust some caps. What's that you said about my Momma? She's thick? Yo Bobby, CVG says my Momma's thick? What's that Bobby? You're agreeing? Stand back again, CVG, I'm gonna to pop this guy.

Michael, Stoke-On-Trent

CVG *Last time we saw someone pick a fight with themselves was watching Fight Club. Either way, we're not coming within five miles of your house. Ever. Not even if it's on fire.*

YOU'VE BEEN...

Tango straaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaange sodaaaaaaa!!!!

titface69, via email

CVG *Seems like a nice boy.*

I'LL BE BACH

I've recently seen Terminator 3. It was great and I want to know if there'll be a game version on PS2.

Matthew, Norfolk

CVG *As sure as a tempestuous toilet follows a meat feast pizza, so the game of the movie follows all big blockbusters these days. Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines is out on PS2 in November, and the storyline weaves in with the movie's. An added bonus is that it will feature exclusively shot celluloid footage of Mr 'Aahl be bark' himself.*

ALL THE WAY TO THE SIM BANK

Does anyone else think Maxis is seriously taking the piss with The Sims? If you wanted the complete version of the game you'd have to shell out for seven games, and now they're bringing out The Sims 2! What are we? Stoopid?

Llady Llink, via email

PS. The Bulgarian Quidditch player is Viktor Krum, not Victor Crum.

CVG *Actually, there's eight on PC alone, not counting The Sims 2, the canned Online or Deluxe Edition – and then there are all the console versions. They wouldn't keep making them if there wasn't a market for them.*

AGE RAGE

Why do they put age limits on games? I know a six-year-old with GTA 3 which has an 18 certificate, and I've got three 15 certificate games. What's the point?

Robert, Doncaster

CVG *Yeah, and why not let six-year-olds watch porn movies too while you're at it?*

UP YER SPHINX-TER

In Issue 263, Deathblade claimed that Yugi has lost once to Seto in Duelist Kingdom. Wrong! In the newer episodes, Egyptian Marik mind-controls Joey Wheeler and forces

Roaming free in Marty's undercrackers this month

CVG STINKER

KING SKIDDY

Don't you hate pants?

Marty, via email

No, pants rock. Only filthy freaks go commando. We don't even want to think what the inside of your trousers look like after a long trip to Silent Hill.

Yugi to battle him, and Yugi loses on purpose! Also, Deathblade claims Exodia is the strongest card in the game. Wrong again! Kaiba's tournament is held so he can get the Egyptian God Cards, which are stronger than even Exodia. Get your homework done!
Naomi, via email

UNCOOPERATIVE MODE

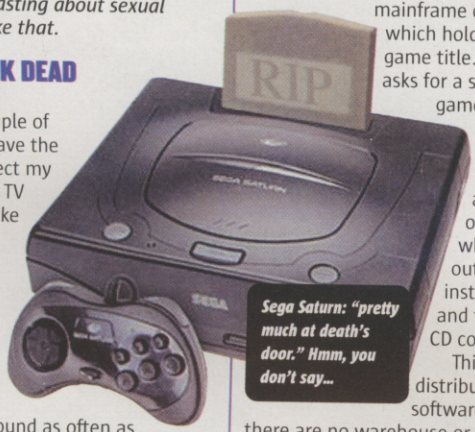
Xbox Live may be fantastic but you can't get much better than having a few mates around to have a laugh on SmackDown! or Pro Evo. I don't see the point in going online and playing with people you don't even know, especially in games where you have to cooperate like Resi Outbreak – I'd be tempted to shoot them all! I'm sure GT4 will be the exception because it's a racing game. If a football game goes online I think it's bound to be a fantastic experience, but I just can't see myself cooperating with people online who are complete strangers.
Carlo Scattini, London

FOOKING ROBBISH

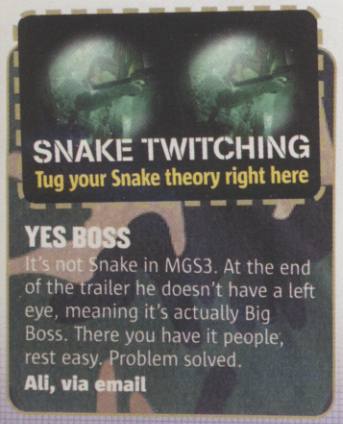
Will there be a Bo' Selecta game coming out for PS2? That would be cracker. Bring back the Bear!
The Village Bicycle (everyone's had a ride), via email
Games *We're not exactly sure you should be boasting about sexual proclivities like that.*

DEATHTANK DEAD SHOCKER

Me and a couple of friends still have the urge to connect my Saturn to the TV and slip in Duke Nukem 3D so we can play Lobotomy's awesome DeathTank Zwei. The trouble is my so-called friends ain't round as often as I'd like, and my old Saturn is pretty much at death's door *[Dead as a doornail, we'd say]*. So is there any chance of seeing this truly remarkable game on any of our present consoles or PC with online play?
Luke, via email
Games *Your friends might come around a bit more if you upgraded your prehistoric console. Something from the steam age or later perhaps.*



Sega Saturn: "pretty much at death's door." Hmm, you don't say...



YES BOSS

It's not Snake in MGS3. At the end of the trailer he doesn't have a left eye, meaning it's actually Big Boss. There you have it people, rest easy. Problem solved.
Ali, via email

Multiplayer's moved on a long way since then too, so the best you could hope for was some unlockable homage in Duke Nukem Forever, and as the joke goes, we've been waiting forever for that one...

COULDA, SHOULDA, OUGHTA

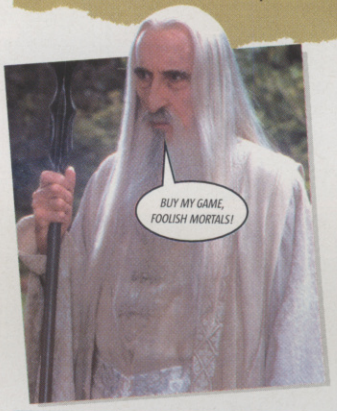
Nintendo should have made a graphically enhanced version of Ocarina Of Time instead of just releasing the old version free with The Wind Waker. Look at what this move did for Resident Evil.
Matt H, Kent

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

Game publishers rattle on about pirate software costing the industry millions of pounds a year, and the cost being passed on to the consumer. Isn't there some other way? How about this – every game store is connected to one mainframe computer which holds every game title. A customer asks for a specific game, the shop assistant instantly downloads and burns it onto a disc while printing out the instructions and the CD cover. This cuts out distribution of the software, plus there are no warehouse or transportation costs. Of course, the next step would be to cut out the game shops and have everyone download and burn games straight from a broadband connection!
Vince, via email
Games *Well done, you've just described a system that was being piloted in UK games stores three years ago (and featured in CVG no less), while Sony announced that soon we'd be downloading movies and videos and even games onto our console hard drives as part of the Digital Entertainment Network. When? When they unveiled PS2. Like many great ideas, you have to wait for the rest of the world to catch up.*

RETURN OF THE PLUG

I recently was lucky enough to have played Return Of The King at the PlayStation Experience in London. The good news is, it's so good it's unbelievable. The whole thing reeks of quality, everything is polished to perfection – including the menu system. There's no slowdown, no matter how many orcs you're sending back to the shadows with a swipe of cold steel and the crystal clear graphics are bursting with excellent animations. This game is ace! BUY IT YOU PATHETIC HUMAN WEAKLINGS!
Saruman, The Tower of Orthanc, Isengard, Middle-Earth, ME13 2IJ
Games *Glad to see Isengard has its very own postcode now.*



STAR LETTER

LAST TIME

In your article on Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time, you express delight with the rewind feature, and wonder where it appears in other games. Though Blinx might have something similar, the ability to rewind time was implemented cleverly and stylishly (through a Fabergé timepiece) in The Last Express. The man behind that 1997 project? Someone named Jordan Mechner.
Wei Kiat, via email
Games *Who was, of course, one of the brains behind the original Prince Of Persia and consultant on Sands Of Time. Well spotted.*

JOYTECH

Each month's star letter-writer gets some quality peripherals from JOYTECH, so make sure you mark your name and address clearly!

WINNER

SOAPBOX

JUST BIN IT!

If you overlooked the dated graphics and crappy Story mode, WWF No Mercy on the N64 can easily compete with today's wrestling games. Location-specific damage, weight classes, unique attributes, hidden legends and multiple grapple types were all pioneered years ago in No Mercy. So why have WWE games taken backwards steps over the last five years? Maybe it's because there's no competition. EA has the FIFA rights, but Konami keeps them on their toes with PES. The WWE should share the rights between two companies to ensure top quality games every time.
Tyler, Middlesex
Games *Old game features being reused in new games? Preposterous idea. Next thing you'll be suggesting THQ dumps the poorer-scoring Raw and Wrestlemania brands and simply puts SmackDown! out on all formats...*

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

WORLD'S FIRST IN-DEPTH PLAYTEST!

EXCLUSIVE FIRST VERDICT ON THE PHATTEST NEW GAME ON THE BLOCK!

Skateboarding's not about freshly groomed professionals making millions of dollars every year.

Skateboarding's about the street. It's about rough tarmac, it's about ragged metal railings. It's about the grit in the graze you get when you faceplant into a ramp.

It's about the underground. And in THUG, it's all about you. Having shown us the high life of the skateboarding pro, Activision's next instalment in the Tony Hawk's series is going back to its roots.

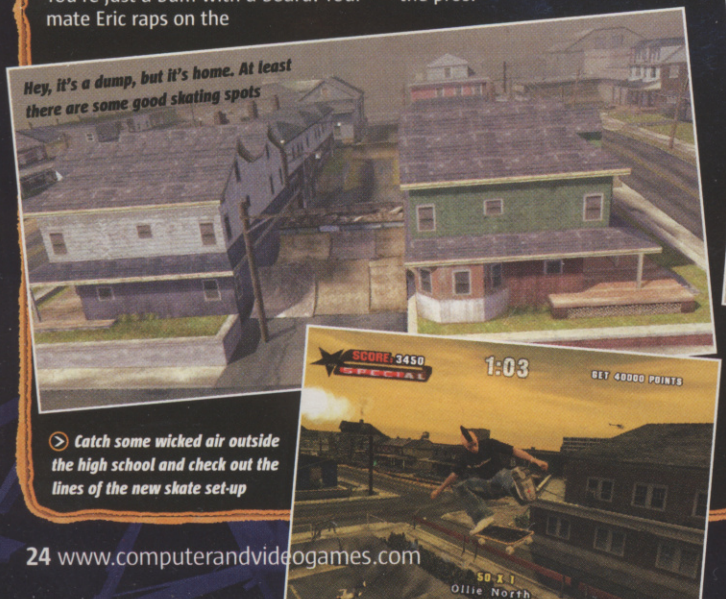
There's no doubt that THUG is going to be the hottest and most realistic extreme sports game ever. Since we like to keep our ears to the streets here at CVG, we got the drop on the gritty world of the underground. It ain't pretty, but it's keeping it real.

GOIN' UNDERGROUND

So you wanna be a pro skater? Live large, big house, five cars? Well, know this – you've got to work for it.

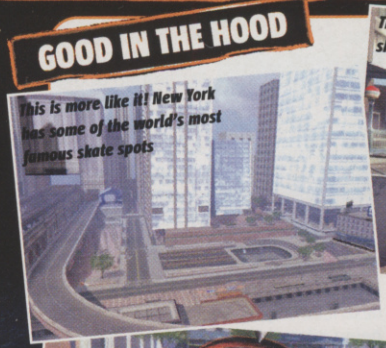
In the other Tony Hawk's games you had the luxury of skating venues with pristine lines and shiny ramps. THUG makes you work for it through a story mode. You're not a pro. You're just a bum with a board. Your mate Eric raps on the window, telling you that pro skater Chad Muska is coming to town. If you could show him your skills you might get a ticket out of this joint.

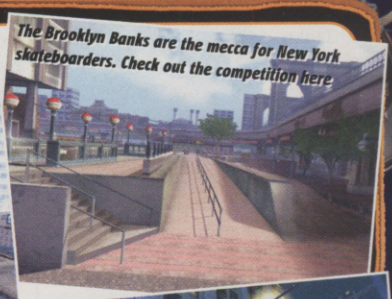
This time out you're playing to make your name on the circuit. You'll need to get sponsored by making a video of your dope skills in New York, get yourself known on the amateur circuit, and then work your way up to the pros.

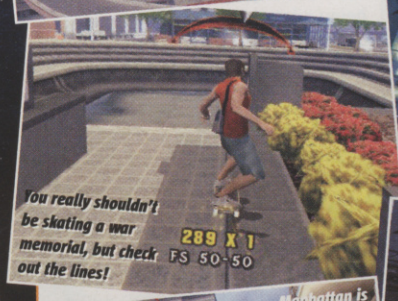


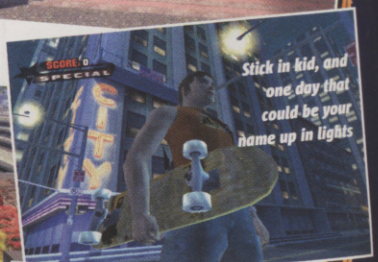
Catch some wicked air outside the high school and check out the lines of the new skate set-up

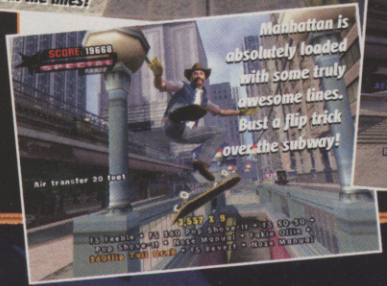
GOOD IN THE HOOD

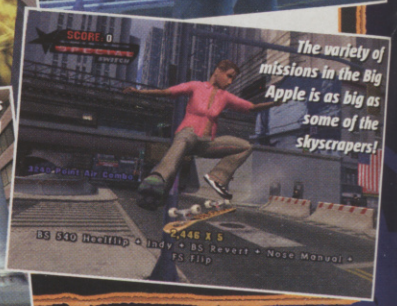










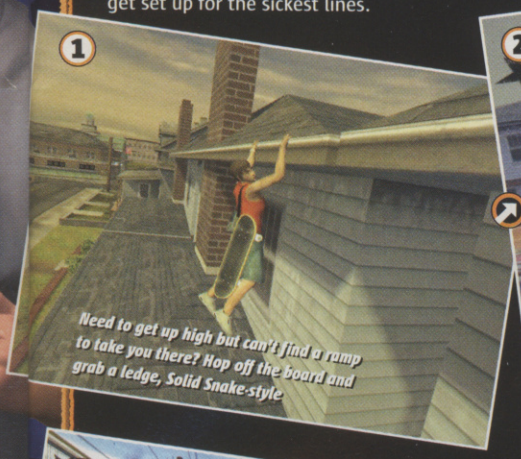


WALK AND ROLL

So walking wears down your new kicks, but you can't skate everywhere. Sometimes you've got to pick up the board to find the best lines.

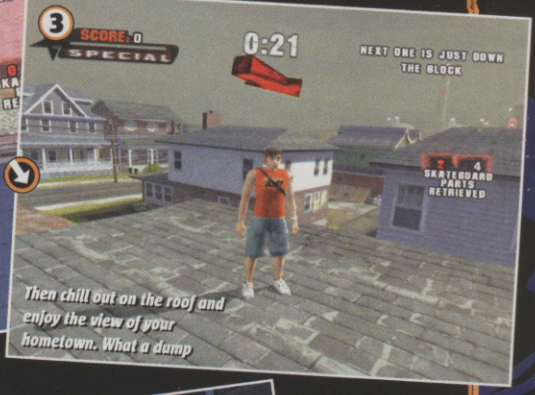
For the first time, THUG lets you hop off your board and explore on foot. It works even better than we'd hoped – just a tap of both shoulder buttons together gets your soles onto terra firma. You're then free to run around as much as you want and you can even clamber up walls, shimmy along ledges, and jump across gaps to get set up for the sickest lines.

But it's not just so you can go for a stroll. If you're in the middle of a huge combo and you've come to the end of your line, just hop off your board. A little clock appears, telling you how long you have before your combo expires. Once you've found a rail, jump straight into a grind and keep on trickin' to rack up monster scores! Like a manual or a revert, it's another way to link your combinations together and offers another new skill for even the most experienced skaters to master. Just think of the sick scores!



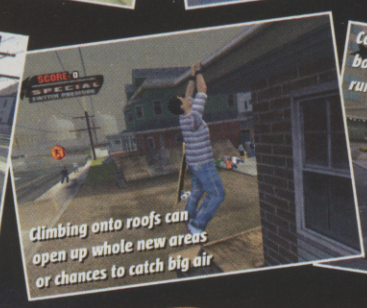
Need to get up high but can't find a ramp to take you there? Hop off the board and grab a ledge, Solid Snake-style

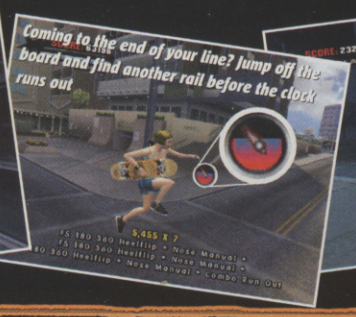
Clamber up to get to bonus pickups and secret areas

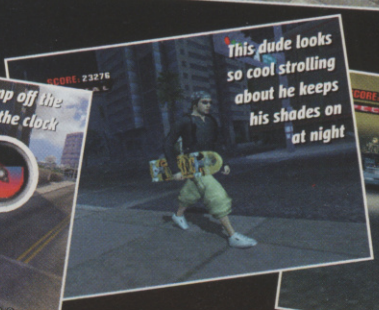


Then chill out on the roof and enjoy the view of your hometown. What a dump

Getting off your board and hoofing it can get you to the dopest skate spots easily


Climbing onto roofs can open up whole new areas or chances to catch big air

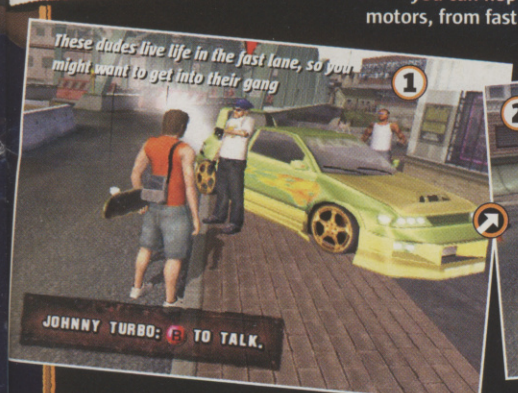

Coming to the end of your line? Jump off the board and find another rail before the clock runs out


This dude looks so cool strolling about he keeps his shades on at night

Getting off your board's handy when you need to get somewhere quick

GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNIN'

Getting off your board isn't the only new mode of transport in THUG. For the first time you can hop into a car! There's a nice variety of motors, from fast an' the furious-style street racers to scabby old bangers. They play a big part in a lot of the missions, and while the handling isn't going to worry Gran Turismo, it makes a nice change from skating everywhere.

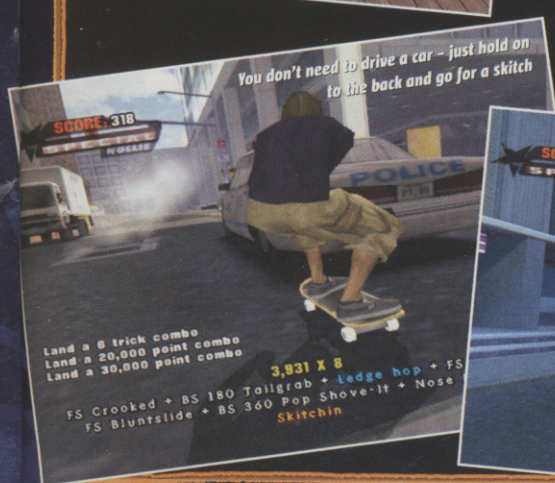


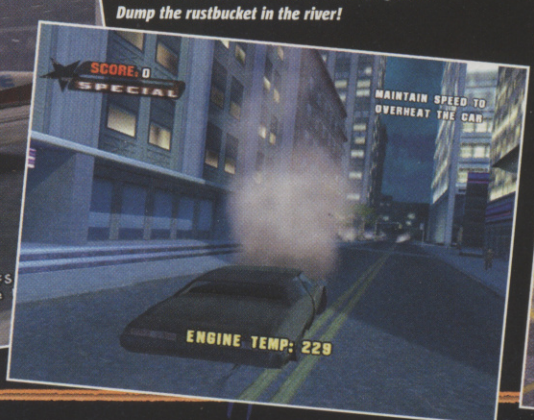
You'll need to prove you can handle a turbo-charged motor as well as a skateboard

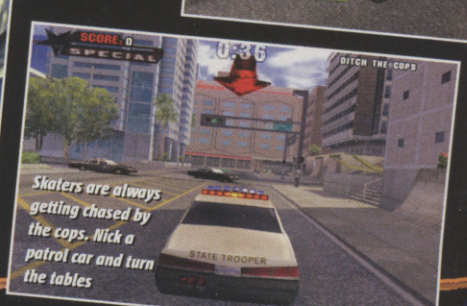
Just cos you're in a car doesn't mean you can't catch some air!

Later on you can use the Street Warriors car in missions

This piece of junk's about to blow a gasket. Dump the rustbucket in the river!







Skaters are always getting chased by the cops. Nick a patrol car and turn the tables

YOUR SKATE CAREER STARTS HERE

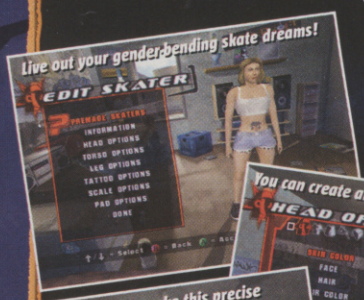
It may have Tony's name on the box but the fifth game in the unstoppable Tony Hawk series is really YOUR skate adventure. You'll already know all about how you can play as a digitised version of yourself in the game (if not check out the Scanning For Life Forms box below and stop living under that rock!). What you might not know is that THUG is the most customisable skateboarding sim yet. Check out how, here, with CVG's guide to personalising your own skate career.

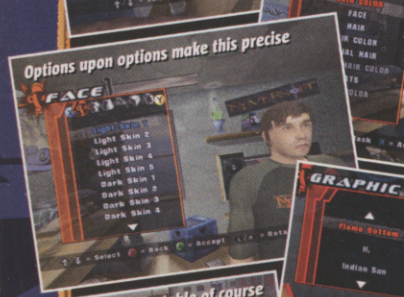
GET TRENDY ON THE CHEAP

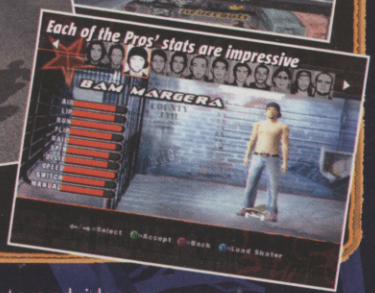
The Create-A-Skater mode is bursting at the seams with more street and skatewear than a Vans manufacturing plant. You can also dress yourself up with tons of accessories and haircuts.

But before you start calling us sissy boys, we're talking about slick tattoos and sweet Oakley sunglasses, chunky metal chains and ultra cool record bags. There are loads of boards available at the skate shop and you can even morph individual muscle groups like forearms, biceps, thighs and your chest to give you that gym-fit physique you know your girlfriend wants you to have. You can even spite her by giving yourself a beer belly!

The wealth of options to tweak to help you truly create a skateboarding alter ego for yourself is amazing, and coupled with the ability to get your face in the game on PS2, this should help make THUG one of the most immersive and realistic sports games you're likely to play in a long while.

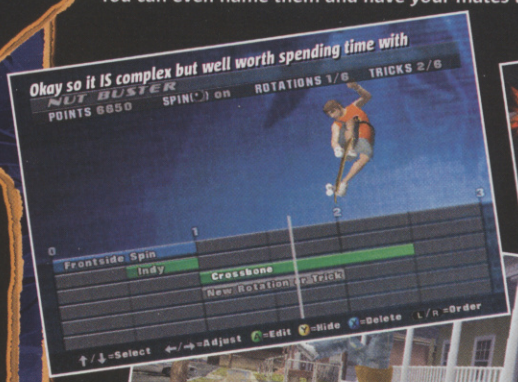


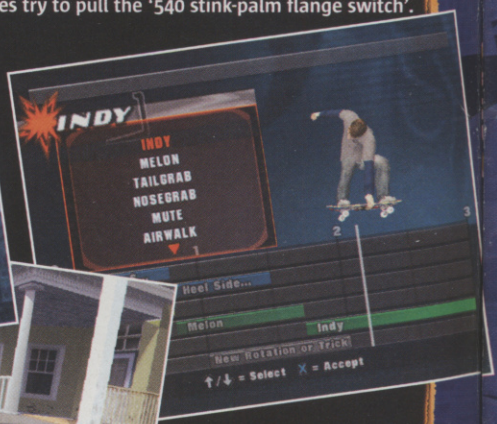




TURN TRICKS, BEE-YATCH!

If your skate career is ever going to get off the ground you need to stop imitating the same old moves any old schmoe can pull and start innovating with some spunky new creations of your own. At certain points in the game, your in-game skating mentors give you the chance to exhibit some true genius. By using already existing moves and stringing them together, tweaking the timing, gravity and balance required to pull them off, you can have skaters all over the world trying to pull your very own tricks. You can even name them and have your mates try to pull the '540 stink-palm flange switch'.





Making tricks is a bit like mixing tracks in a music program. You simply edit them together

Combine existing tricks together to make your own killer moves

SCANNING FOR LIFEFORMS

PS2 owners get by far the best features in THUG, in the form of online play and the ability to scan your own face into the game. It's not complicated, and you can save yourself the bother of 'jacking in to the mainframe' (maaan) and get Neversoft to do it for you.

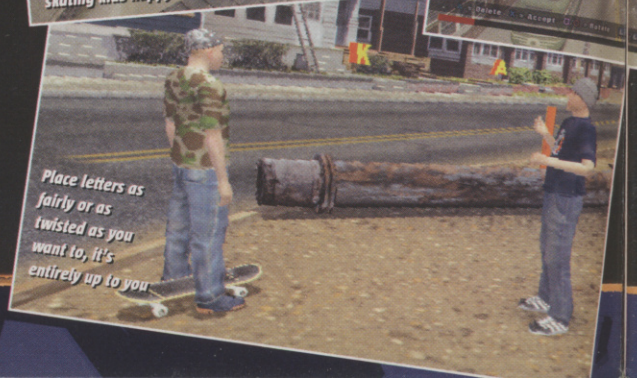
Take a still digital photo of your face using any digital means, including mobile phones, and simply email it to a special address. Within a minute (so says Neversoft, at any rate) you'll receive a password on your online PS2 that you feed into the game to create a skin of your face. You can then edit and tweak it to perfection. At the time of going to press, Neversoft's servers had seemingly exploded so we couldn't test it out. We'll update you as soon as we have!

USE THIS, OR THIS!

CVG'S SKATE PARK OF DEATH

Designing your own skate park isn't a new feature for Tony Hawk games. But the level of detail and the range of obstacles, berms, ramps, loops and, er, flagpoles you can place in your arena is incredible.

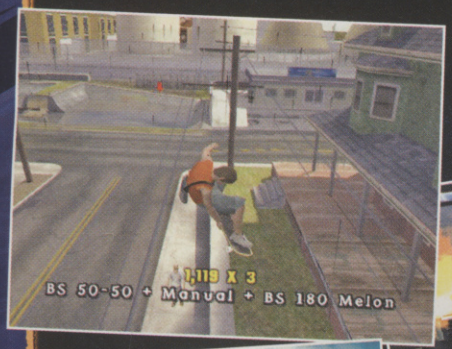
What IS new for THUG is the way you can now place goals and challenges in your park. These range from placing 'S-K-A-T-E' and 'C-O-M-B-O' letters to setting high score challenges. It's so easy; a mollusc could knock together an impressive park in no time at all, supposing that molluscs had hands to hold the pad. Who knows what wonders you can create after a flagon of Tizer?



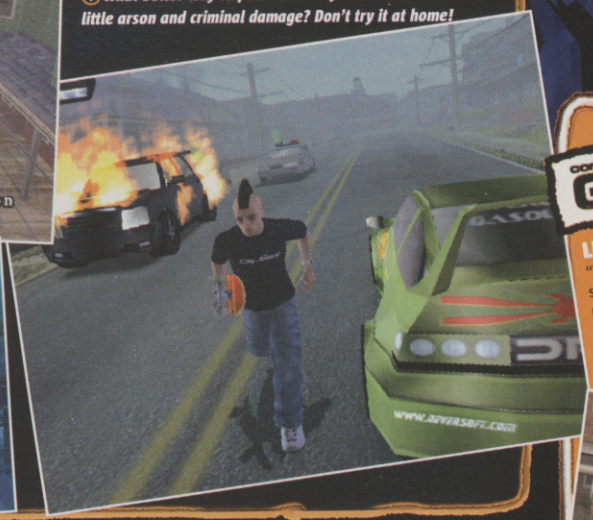
720° SIAN LLOYD

New for THUG is the passing of time as you play and far more natural-looking weather effects.

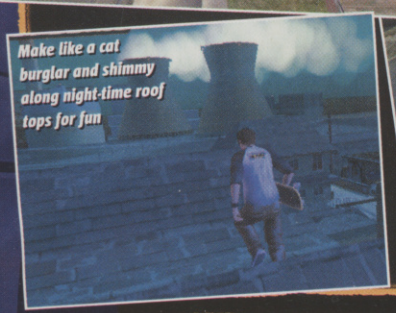
The flow of time is tied to the number of missions you've cleared in an area, and sadly not a natural real-time progression. This is because certain missions have to be performed at the correct time of day, like sneaking around New Jersey without getting spotted by a rival skate gang. Weather is mainly a cosmetic addition – it's not any harder to skate in the wet – but it does help bring the game back to reality.



Rain effects are pretty but it would have been nice if water made conditions more treacherous for skating



What better way to pass the dusky hours than with a little arson and criminal damage? Don't try it at home!

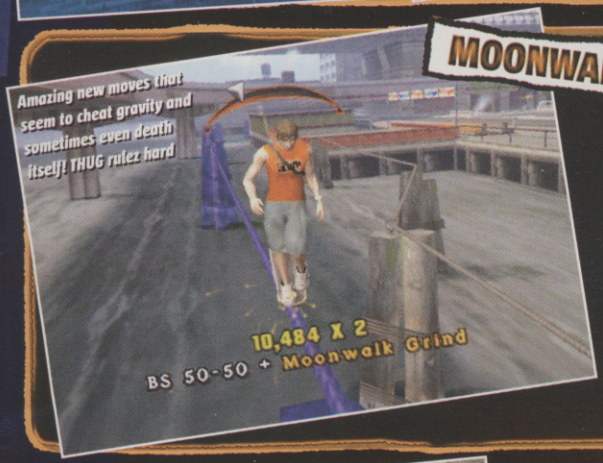


Make like a cat burglar and shimmy along night-time roof tops for fun

GRIND THE RUMOUR MILL

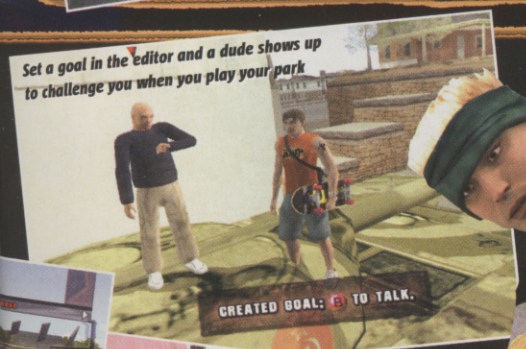
Activision reps are staying tight-lipped about online PS2 play. What we CAN tell you is that all of the original games so popular in Tony 4 will feature, such as Graffiti, Capture The Flag and Trick Attack, and that new games WILL be included in THUG. As to what these are we can only dream at the moment as the publisher wants to reward fans by surprising them with ace new modes. At the top of our wish list for online play is an increased number of players in each competition, hopefully making THPS4's four-player games look like old news.

MOONWALKING ON SUNSHINE

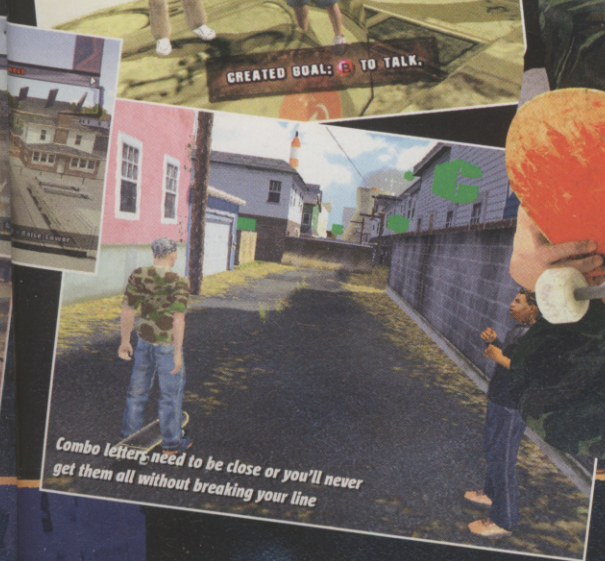


Amazing new moves that seem to cheat gravity and sometimes even death itself! THUG rulez hard

In addition to creating your own tricks, there are some real doozies already programmed into the game. As in other Hawk's games, you need to trick to boost your Special bar and then a whole new world of crazy trickin' opens up. Our current fave new move is the moonwalk. Jacko himself would weep!



Set a goal in the editor and a dude shows up to challenge you when you play your park



Combo letters need to be close or you'll never get them all without breaking your line

computer and video games TEAM RECKONS

LEE

"This feels like classic Tony to play, despite the story additions. Instead the open structure and more mission-based approach add layers of depth to the gameplay to push the series in a welcome new direction. It's amazing how every TH game blows all other contenders out of the skatepark with grazes on their knees."

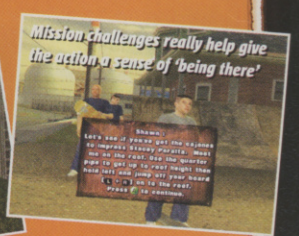
That could be you in the car if you impress the skating Pros

You'll develop a love-hate relationship with the clock as you try to chain your combos

GRAEME

"THUG feels real. It's grimy, it's dark, it's dirty, but most of all it's hotter than hell. The fantastic essence of the earlier Tony Hawk's games is still the foundation for this new approach, and the combination is superb. It puts you deeper into the experience than almost any game we've seen and lets you live out your pro skater dreams the hard way. You'll appreciate the rewards even more!"

Grind the neighbours' prize-winning gardens

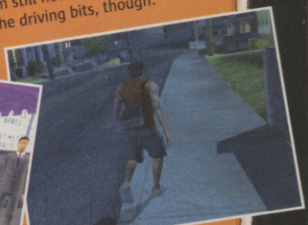


Mission challenges really help give the action a sense of 'being there'

MIKE

"Off-the-board action! My first instinct was to call up and scream at Neversoft for butchering its amazing skate engine. But when I got hands-on with THUG I was stunned at how perfectly the on-foot stuff fits in. It definitely brings a fresh flavour to linking tricks together, and accessing new areas. Plus the whole countdown clock thing adds even more tension to stringing together mammoth lines. I'm still not convinced about the driving bits, though."

You can't do this in real life without getting dissed by bouncers



So trendy you could be heading out for a night of power clubbing in town

INCOMING

ACCESS ALL AREAS TO THE HOTTEST FORTHCOMING GAMES!

HOW CVG'S PREVIEWS WORK

- PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
- DEVELOPER: ACTIVISION
- OUT: DECEMBER 25
- ONLINE GAMING
- x16
- IN A NUTSHELL: Hotly anticipated, super-realistic, sneaky covert-ops sequel to last year's first-person shooter. The team-orientated multiplayer mode encompasses a wide variety of objective-based missions.
- GAMECUBE XBOX GBA
- WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

ONLINE GAMING Can you play the game online, against other gamers around the globe? Find out here

PUBLISHER, DEVELOPER AND RELEASE DATE Who makes the game and when it's due out, to the best of CVG's knowledge

PLAYERS How many people can play. If it's anything from one to 32, we'll put 32!

IN A NUTSHELL A brief summary of what the game is like. If it's an update and CVG has already previewed it we'll also sum up stuff we've said before

FORMAT The console we played the game on is highlighted red, but other formats it's coming out on are listed too!

WEBSITE Want more info, more screens and to see it in action? Visit this URL!

THE BEST PICS See exactly how good (or bad!) the game looks with CVG's sweet-as screenshots

INFO OVERLOAD! What it's like to play, how it compares to other games and whether it's any good

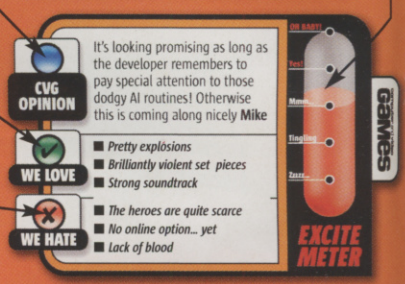
CVG OPINION What we thought of the game, no matter what stage of development the game is at

WE LOVE The good things we like about the game so far

WE HATE The things we'd really like the developers to avoid including in the final game

WHAT THE EXCITE METER™ MEANS

You can tell how excited CVG's experts are about the game being previewed simply by looking at the Excite Meter! Easy, huh?



NEW INFO AND PICS!

Missions aren't confined to City 17. This level is set on a burning cargo ship, crammed full of zombies

VALVE TALKS TO CVG!

HALF-LIFE 2™

- PUBLISHER: VU GAMES
- DEVELOPER: VALVE
- OUT: TBA
- ONLINE GAMING
- TBC
- IN A NUTSHELL: Sequel to one of the most influential shooters ever and some four years in the making, HL2 promises to rewrite the shooter rulebook – and that's based on what little has been shown so far.
- PC CD ROM
- XBOX
- WWW.VALVESOFTWARE.COM
- UPDATE!

Hold everything. Book yourself a holiday, plan yourself a sickie, sell your Gran to upgrade your PC. Time's almost up in the agonising wait for the über-shooter that promises to drag the gaming nation into one giant experiment in sleep deprivation, otherwise known as playing Half-Life 2.

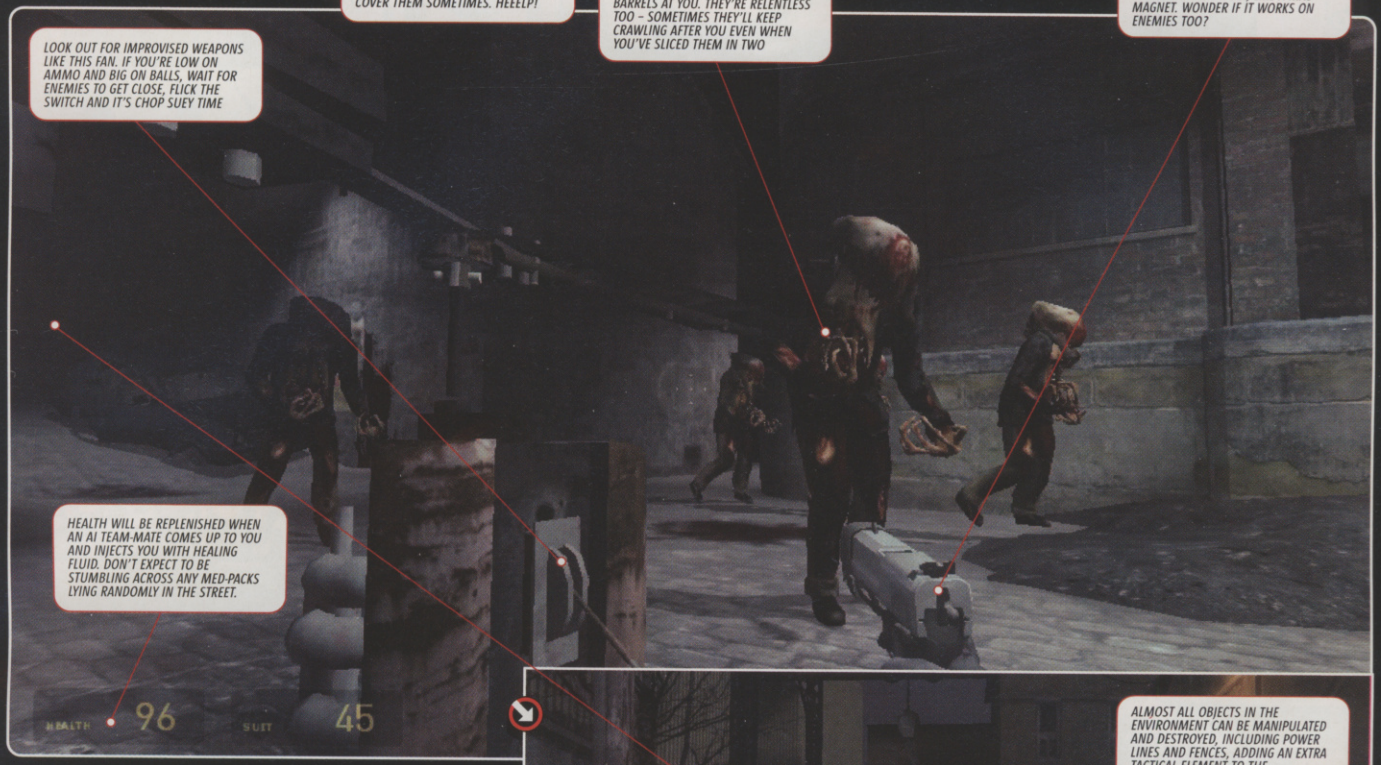
With just a few weeks left on the countdown clock, CVG managed to catch up with developer Valve (not easy as their people are pretty nippy on their feet) to get the latest on how the game is coming together. During our conversation, some exciting new information cropped up, like the fact that you'll be able to drive an array of nifty vehicles. These range from machine gun-toting buggies to heavily armoured APCs – you'll need 'em to mince up the 50 types of alien invaders threatening the planet. Nice!

KEEPING THE STREETS TIDY

And in an attempt to make HL2 feel as realistic as possible (we already know about the breathtaking physics and AI which intelligently reacts to your actions rather than being scripted), you'll no longer stumble

Remember, badly damaged enemy craft sometimes do suicide runs!

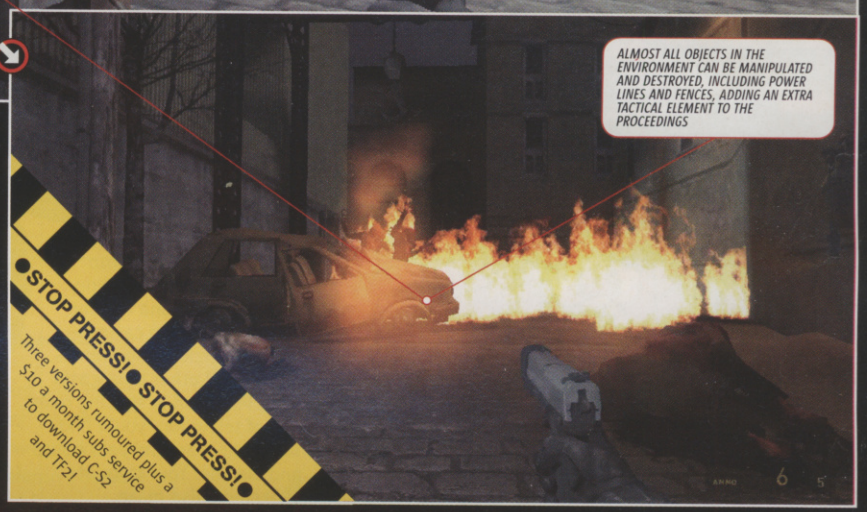
WELCOME TO THE ROTARY CLUB

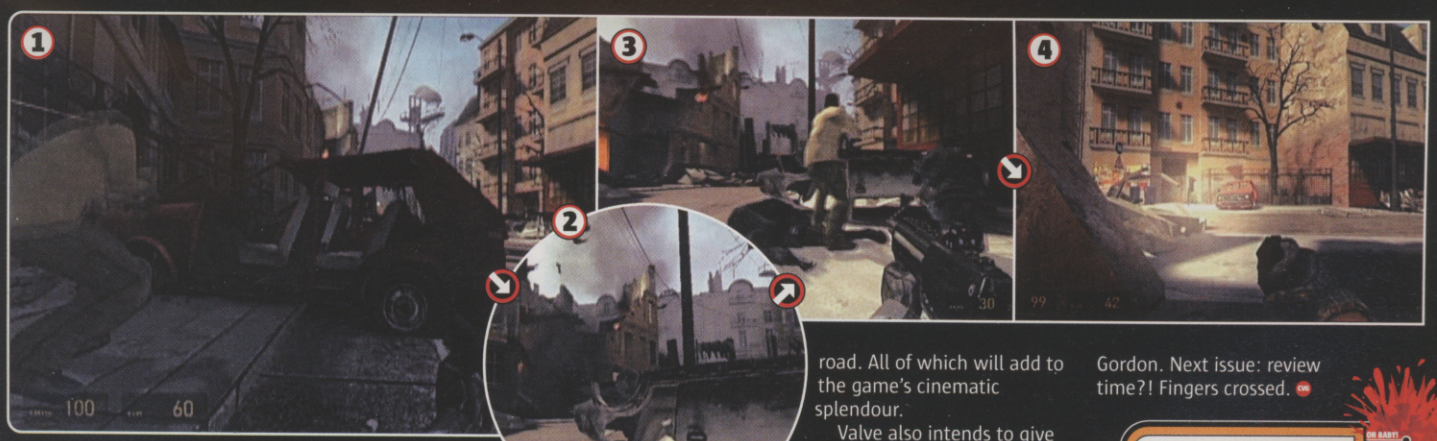


WHAT A CONCEPT

Check out this new concept art! Reckon you're safe inside that tracked vehicle? We've seen a giant insectoid alien...

Looks like a sniper assassin to us





across med-packs in the middle of a street to replenish your health. Instead, you'll have to seek out medics to heal you in the midst of some of the massive team-based battles that you'll become embroiled in.

Of course there'll be a huge array of weaponry. Heat-seeking rockets, object manipulators, machine guns, shotguns and pheromone bombs that let you control certain enemies like the terrifying Starship Trooper-esque Antlions. Not forgetting the now legendary brain-busting crowbar, which you'll be handed by NPCs, rather than finding them lying about randomly in the road. All of which will add to the game's cinematic splendour.

Valve also intends to give massive support to the home-grown Mod spin-offs community, including a weekend-long course to would-be DIY designers. Valve still claimed that the game would ship on September 30, but our hunch is that it'll slip by at least a month. Just enough time to grow yourself a goatee, blag yourself a crowbar and change your name by deed poll to Gordon. Next issue: review time?! Fingers crossed. CVG

CVG OPINION Promises revolutionary AI and physics, most immersive storyline and environments ever and best use of a goatee beard in a videogame. **Gordon**

WE LOVE
- *Freeform AI reacts intelligently*
- *Characters actually look real*
- *Huge array of enemies*

WE HATE
- *Not knowing if it's slipping*
- *What's happening to multiplay?*
- *When's the Xbox version out?*

POKÉMON™

POKÉMON CHANNEL & POKÉMON PINBALL

■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO
■ DEVELOPER NINTENDO
■ OUT: 2004

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Pokémania continues, with one new title apiece planned for the GameCube and GBA. There's also Pokémon Colosseum in the works for the first half of 2004. Will it never end?

POKÉMON CHANNEL | POKÉMON PINBALL

WWW.NINTENDO.COM

UPDATE!

With Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire being Nintendo's biggest titles since... well, since Pokémon Gold and Silver, there's no questioning the strength of Nintendo's most powerful brand.

The latest venue for the catchable critters are the GBA and Cube, with three more titles making the trip over from Japan shortly.

When Pikachu doesn't want to go outside, he'll let you know

Watch the Pokémon Nice News Network with Pikachu. It's nice news

I'M WITH PIKACHU

GameCube owners at last get their Pokéfix with Pokémon Channel. This sequel to N64's Hey You Pikachu does away with that game's microphone controller but keeps the same idea: make Pikachu the happiest Pokémon ever!

The game is centred on a television that's tuned into multiple channels of Pokémon programming. You and Pikachu can watch a Pokémon cartoon along with exercise programmes, quiz shows and other broadcasts featuring Pokémon in starring roles. Outside of television, you'll find items to collect around your house and outside. Your favourite Pokémon also make appearances as you and Pikachu answer their Pokétrivia.

A bunch of Pokémon black and white mini games are included

Live out your wildest dreams and order Pikachu around - you devil, you!

the Pokémon with your Pokéball in order to catch and evolve them to higher forms. Over 201 Pokémon are featured in the game, indexed in your Pokédex. Pikachu of course takes his usual central role, standing behind your flippers and occasionally launching an electric blast at a Pokéball that's gone astray.

PORTABLE POKÉ-PINBALL

Portable gamers aren't being left out either. This latest GBA title takes the Pokémon friends to the pinball table. Two boards themed in Ruby and Sapphire are available, each with all the bumpers, passageways and sub-tables that you could want.

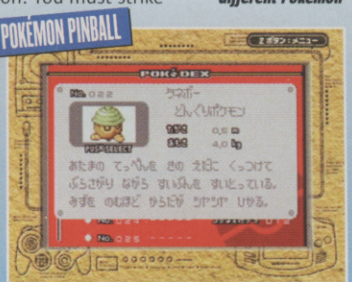
The catch is that you're shooting a Pokéball around the board, attempting to catch Pokémon. You must strike

The Pokémon are scattered around the board

The Ruby and Sapphire tables have different Pokémon

Rack up a huge score and slam the ball into the centre of the table to reveal a Pokémon

Once you move into Get Mode you have an opportunity to catch a brand new Poké-critter



Information on all the Pokémon you've caught are stored in the Pokédex. D'oh!

POKÉMON CHANNEL

CVG OPINION — Pikachu's charms never wear off, so if you love the yellow critter you'll have fun with Pokémon Channel. But only hardcore Pokéfreaks need apply. **Anoop**

WE LOVE
- Yes we still love Pikachu
- Watching Pikachu dance
- Making Pikachu mad. It's sadistic

WE HATE
- Why is the cool voice support replaced by a stupid pointer?
- No game in there for non-Pokists

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / Yes! / Mmm... / Tingling / Zzzz... — games

POKÉMON PINBALL

CVG OPINION — Pokémon mixes well with pinball, and catching creatures on the table adds a whole new dimension to the gameplay. Very cool. **Anoop**

WE LOVE
- Catching Pokémon is as thrilling as in the RPG games
- It's a lot prettier than on GC

WE HATE
- If you hate Pokémon then the pinball won't win you over
- Catching 'em all over again

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / Yes! / Mmm... / Tingling / Zzzz... — games

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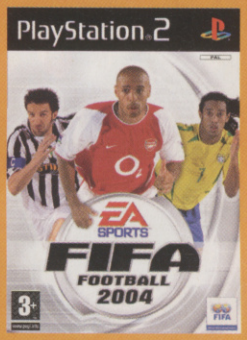


FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

Release Date: 31 October 2003

FIFA Football 2004 returns as the true authority in football gaming. All new Off The Ball™ Control lets you control the man on the ball and the men off it. A new Career Mode gives you the chance to take a team from the lower divisions, battle through ranks, sign new players, and turn them into champions.

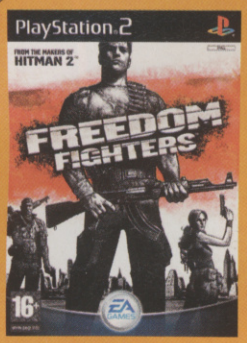
XBOX · PC · PS2 · GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

SSX3

Release Date: 24 October 2003

Discover the open mountain in the newest version of the smash-hit SSX snowboarding franchise. SSX 3 features all-new events and courses, awe-inspiring tricks, and a cast of cool, customizable characters. Discover the open terrain, explore its hidden crevices, and conquer its peaks.

XBOX · PC · PS2 · GAME BOY ADVANCE SP



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Release Date: 26 September 2003

In a world where the Soviet Union won the Cold War, a fierce conflict is unfolding in the streets of America. Taking on the role of Christopher Stone, players evolve from an average New Yorker into a fearless patriot who recruits and leads an army of freedom fighters in the streets of New York City.

XBOX · PC · PS2

TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2004

Release Date: 21 November 2003

Specifically designed for the console, Total Club Manager 2004 offers total management control through an intuitive navigation system and dynamic user interface, while integrating the most comprehensive player and team database on the PS2.

XBOX · PC · PS2

SOULCALIBUR™ II

Release Date: 26 September 2003

SoulCalibur™ II is the third installment in the hugely successful "Soul" franchise. The game offers massive refinements in its arena design, offensive and defensive combat and battle tactics, alongside improved character graphics and intuitive controls.

XBOX · PS2

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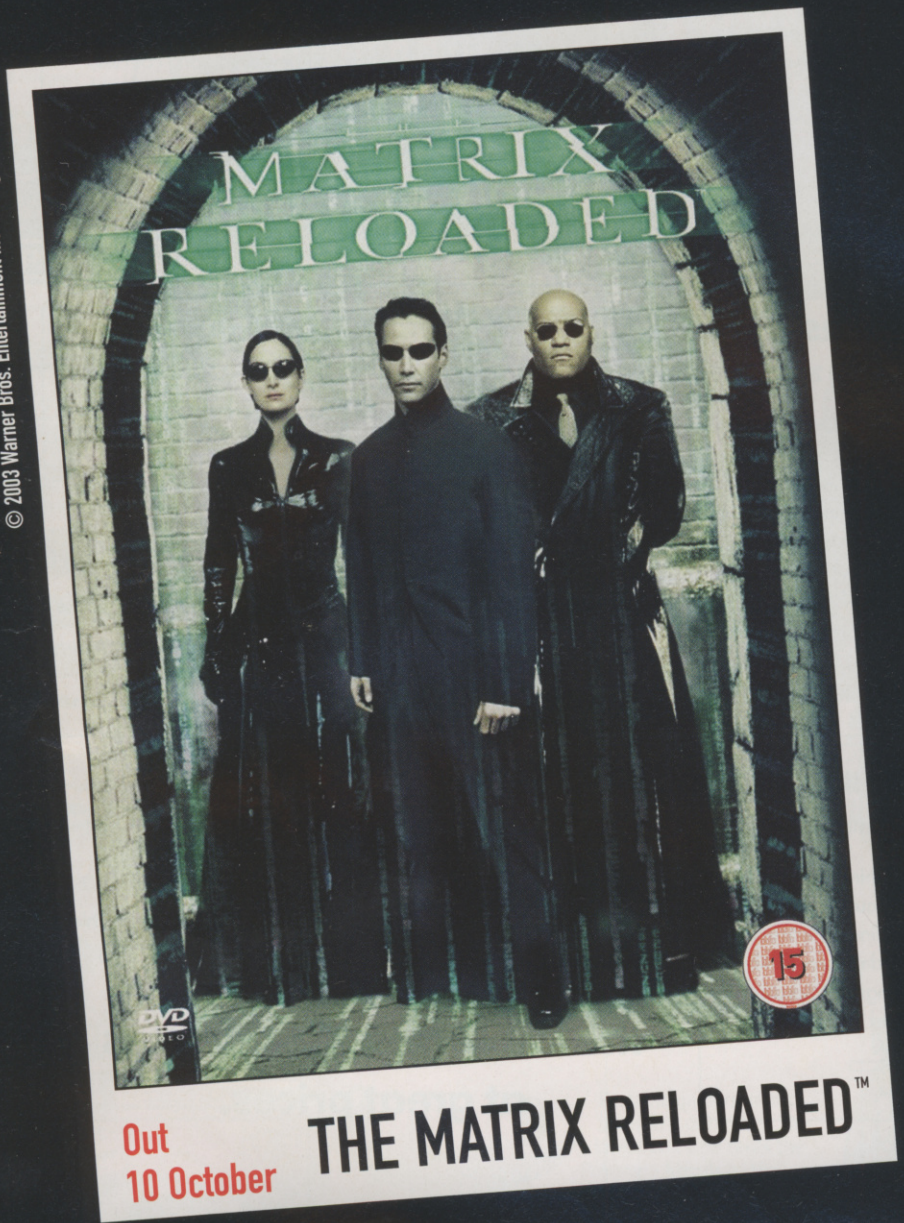
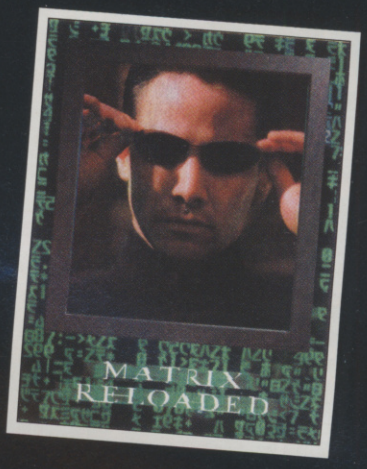


Out
10 October

THE MATRIX RELOADED™



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The Wachowski Brothers' spectacular sequel to the ground-breaking sci-fi classic finds Zion in desperate peril.

With the final piece of the trilogy, The Matrix Revolutions, in cinemas in a matter of weeks, this is the perfect taster to the most eagerly awaited film of the year.

whatever turns you on!

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- PUBLISHER KONAMI
- DEVELOPER KCET
- OUT: OCTOBER 31

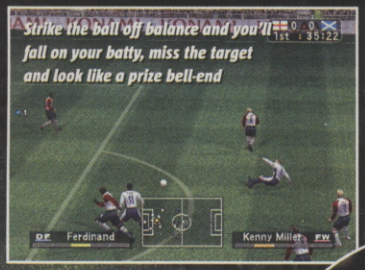
ONLINE GAMING x8

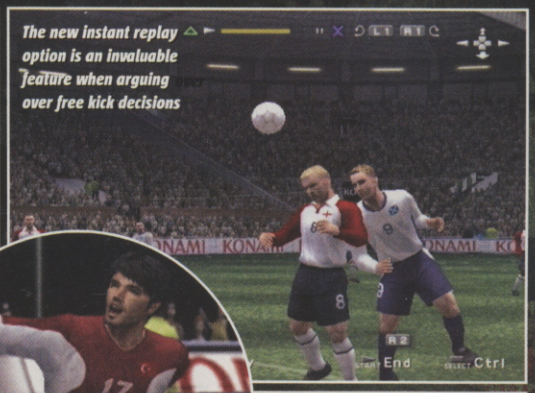
IN A NUTSHELL

Winning Eleven's European brother is gearing up to knock FIFA 2004 out of the title race this Christmas. It's got all the skills and thrills to keep you hooked for months. Scratch that, years!

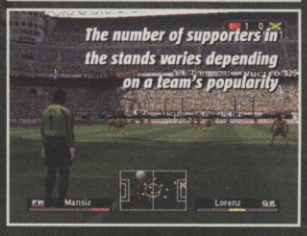
WWW.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM

UPDATE!





After an R2 sidestep, pull back and hold R2 to cheekily roll the ball under your foot



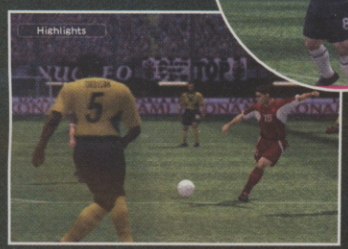
PES3 TM

PROEVOLUTIONSOCCER

Last month we gushed like loonies about how wicked Winning Eleven 7 is. This month we've been caning the English version, Pro Evolution Soccer 3, and we're not going to shut up about how brilliant it is either. So there!

It plays just as amazingly as its Japanese counterpart. As you'd expect, all the new feints and tricks are in here, like the Zidane-style 360° pirouette. However, although the dribbling and close control is much improved, it's much more of a passing game.

Defenders close down space faster and are far harder to out-manoeuvre, forcing you to ping the ball around rapidly and more accurately than before. This makes for much more realistic matches, and urges you to call upon all your creativity to piece together world-class plays.



The highlights are really worth watching now

BACK IN THE DRESSING ROOM

It's not just the on-pitch action that shines. All PES3's new features are guaranteed to make it a sure-fire success with fans of the celebrated series. An extra 24 club teams bring the grand total to 64, and it's awesome that this time you can play club versus national. Take Brazil on with West Ham, or go up against Argentina as the Gooners! You've got the freedom to mix it up as much as you want.

Plus there's stacks more silverware to chase. New cups and leagues such as the WEFA Championships (essentially the Champions League) present you with loads of extra hours of intensely competitive action to enjoy. Also this time you can set it so that you're penalised for resetting the PS2 mid-match if you're losing in a tournament or league game.

This same penalty rule can be applied in the expanded Master League mode, which now sees you battling for special PES points as well as regular points as you attempt to climb through divisions. These PES points are earned when you win certain fixtures, and can be spent in the new shop where you can buy all sorts of extra unlockable treasures. New balls, different match speeds, extra stadiums, teams, players, and funky hairdos! There's a mountain of stuff to collect, and you'll want it all.

Other than having to hit the ball a smidge harder, the free kick system remains exactly the same

WE RESPECT YOUR COMMENTS

You'll no longer feel the need to switch the language settings to Spanish, because the English commentary is miles better than before. Gone are the repetitive and lifeless comments that we had to endure last time round.

But, as with WE7, the alarming lack of official team names and incorrect player spellings in PES3 will bug the hell out of hardcore footie followers. This is where FIFA 2004 really outclasses PES3. But if you're willing and patient enough to wade through all the amazing customisation menus, you can make it as official as you want – except for creating sponsorship logos. It is a downer, but it's tough to bear too much of a grudge considering that the actual gameplay is streets ahead of any other footie title to date.

MR POTATO HEAD

You can't download your face into the game like you can in Tony Hawk's Underground, but in PES3 you've got all the tools to create a face manually.

Once you've got all the basics in place, like haircut and skin tone, select the 'build a face' option. Now tinker around with the positioning and style of each individual facial feature

Keep the ball moving or you'll lose possession in a flash

CVG OPINION

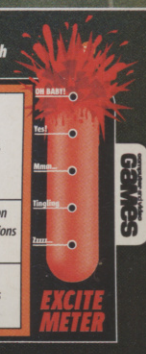
This is the pro's choice. No other footie game gives you this much freedom to express yourself on the pitch. Accept no substitutes! **Mike**

WE LOVE

- Instinctively super-sharp action
- Player likenesses and animations
- Replays at any time

WE HATE

- You can't play online
- The shortage of official teams and kits



RATCHET & CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED

PUBLISHER
SONY
DEVELOPER
INSOMNIAC GAMES
OUT DECEMBER 11

IN A NUTSHELL

Following the global success of Ratchet & Clank, the PS2's oddest couple return. This action-packed adventure takes them to the farthest corners of the universe in search of an experimental Proto Pet.

WWW.INSOMNIACGAMES.COM

UPDATE!

Ratchet isn't such a cuddly character this time around – he's ready for a scrap!

Seems Ratchet and Clank aren't Going Commando after all. But the name change doesn't fool us. Sony may not want us to think of the rascally robot and his furry friend as going pantless, but that's how we'll always think of them.

Our heroes are becoming edgier and more violent for this eagerly awaited sequel, promising players a deeper and more rewarding experience that will test their combat skills to the max.

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

Since their exploits in the original, Ratchet and Clank have fallen on hard times. With the universe at peace, no one needs heroes anymore and they've been reduced to appearing on cheesy talk shows earn a buck. However, their world is turned upside down when the pair come face to face with Abercombie Fitzwidget, CEO of Mega Corp in the nearby Bogon galaxy. One of the corp's most vital experiments, the cute Proto Pet, has been stolen by a mysterious saboteur and Fitzwidget hires Ratchet to jump into his spaceship and chase the light-fingered rogue.

The game features 20 sprawling worlds, each one brought to life by oddball enemies and indigenous wildlife that make the original's locations look empty by comparison. There's also more variety in the missions and challenges on offer, with space battles, gladiator-style brawls, racing sequences and improved character interaction. The result is that Locked And Loaded feels a lot slicker and more accomplished than its classic predecessor.

Aside from the new RPG elements (check out the box on the right), this sequel will also delight fans of the original game with bigger worlds to explore, brand new characters to meet and the same twisted sense of humour that made the first game stand out from the crowd.

Yup, you've guessed it – we're pretty excited about this one. If the developers at Insomniac keep their heads down and continue polishing the gameplay, this could be one of the biggest PS2 Christmas releases.

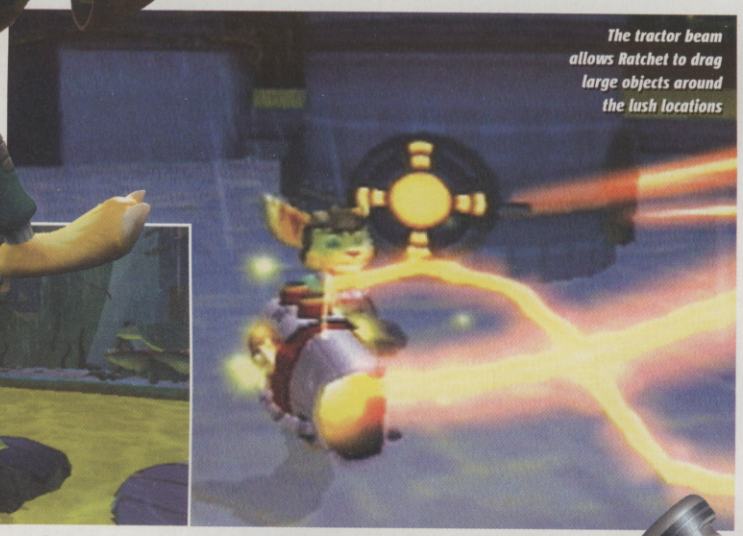
CHARACTER BUILDING

The blasting and platforming action has an RPG edge, with players being able to develop Ratchet's strength and abilities over time by defeating enemies and collecting Nanotech points.

As Ratchet kills enemies he accumulates Nanotech points

Before long, he reaches his Nanotech target...

...making him stronger and better equipped to tackle the game's bosses



The tractor beam allows Ratchet to drag large objects around the lush locations

In the swamp, jump on the back of monsters to get a lift across the deadly green goo

This gadget allows Ratchet to turn switches and activate machines

Once again, the characters you meet are great

The Lylat Wars-style flights between planets are fun and exciting

CVG OPINION

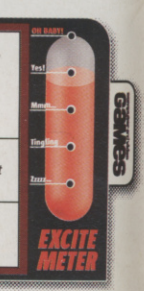
Colourful, fun and compelling, Ratchet & Clank 2 is infinitely better than the original and promises to be one of this year's biggest hits. **David**

WE LOVE

- Fun to play
- Fabulous characters and script
- Massive worlds

WE HATE

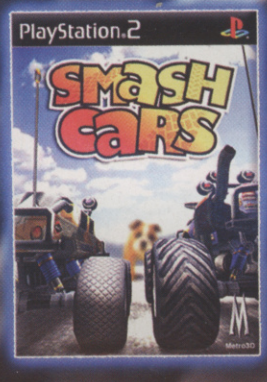
- Bottomless pits
- Drowning in the swamp



NO BATTERIES REQUIRED

SMASH CARS

Smash Cars takes the fast and furious world of RC Racing to a new level



'Smash Cars is certainly one of the best budget games we've seen and far and away the most fun' computer and video GAMES

'Smash Cars deserves to be remembered' EDGE

'The best RC racer on the PS2' PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Blaze a trail to victory through 13 of the most challenging 3D environments designed to push your abilities to the limit; do you have what it takes to win in this 'No Batteries Required' RC Racer?

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PlayStation.2

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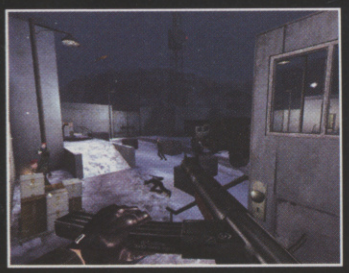


As a prequel to NOLF 2, the story fits in snugly with the exploits of Cate Archer

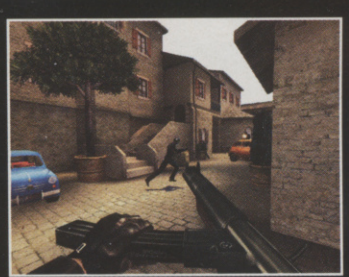
PUBLISHER
VU GAMES
DEVELOPER
MONOLITH
OUT: NOVEMBER 2003
PC CD ROM
ONLINE GAMING
x16
WWW.VUGAMES.COM

CONTRACT JACK

Videogame transvestism – we love it. And playing as a woman has never been more fun than when stepping into the panties of Sixties swinger Cate Archer for class PC shooter No One Lives Forever 2. But now Monolith's new standalone expansion pack has gone all manly on us, dropping you into the crusty Y-fronts of a gruff hitman.

Normally NOLF games have you sneaking around, but Contract J.A.C.K (Just Another Contract Killer) is a man whose specialities are carnage, gunfire and things that explode. To help him in his fight against rival criminal organisation Danger Danger he's got gadgets to die for – a Vespa scooter with a mounted machine gun, a skidoo with a rocket launcher and enough C4 to blow up a small island nation. Seems the Swinging Sixties weren't about peace and love after all.

One of the game's highlights is a frenetic laser battle in a lunar space station



Jack will be killing people in locations as exotic as Italy and the Czech Republic

WE LOVE
- Sexy Sixties setting
- Imaginative weapons
- High quota of violence

WE HATE
- Fairly short
- Sometimes a bit too silly

EXCITE METER: OH BABE! / Yes! / Mmm... / Tingling / Zzzz...

CVG GAMES

BILLY HATCHER and the Giant Egg

PUBLISHER
SEGA
DEVELOPER
SONIC TEAM
OUT: NOVEMBER
ONLINE GAMING
x4
WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM

IN A NUTSHELL

It's the latest bonkers brainchild from the creators of Sonic The Hedgehog. Developers rarely have the balls (or indeed the eggs) to cook up platform adventures as out there or original as this.

Spider-Man's gimpish red romper suit. Superman's pants-on-the-outside get-up. It's fair to say that superheroes aren't renowned for their fashion sense. But Billy Hatcher's chicken suit takes the biscuit. It's got to be one of the daftest looks in history.

But Billy boy's got an excuse for dressing up like an idiot. Unlike Spidey or Clark Kent he gets his special powers from his stupid costume. So what amazing special ability does his clobber give him that's worth such physical humiliation? Duh, power over all eggs of course. How mad is that?

GOTTA HATCH 'EM ALL

The egg is Billy's greatest weapon. There are loads of different sorts dotted around every level. Encased within each ovum is a Pokémon-like creature that Billy can use to attack enemies or to help him solve puzzles.

You get to ride some of the creatures that hatch from your eggs

However, in order to coax these handy helpers out of their shells you've got to roll your chosen egg around the level and feed it so that it grows. Once it grows to full size hit the right shoulder button and Billy cock-a-doodle-doos, triggering the hatching process. Then bingo! You're the proud owner of a unique new buddy with special powers.

You'll team up with crazy flying monkeys with the ability to shower foes with lightning, fire-spitting kangaroo-type creatures, and bags of other bizarre beasts. But unlike Pokémon you can't collect the animals. Instead you team up with them for a short time until their powers run out.

Sonic Team's barmy new platformer is anything but ordinary, but that's where its charm lies. The combat and precision jumping elements are dead easy to master, but it's all the insane characters and egg-rolling antics that make it a truly unique experience. Sure it's weird, but you can't fault Sonic Team's ambition to bring us something fresh and wildly different. Cracking stuff... sorry.

Protecting your egg is essential. Otherwise it will develop cracks and eventually end up scrambled

This little fella is Richie the seal. His powers are ice and illusions. Clever pup

CHICKEN RUN

It's not all single-player egg-based madness. You can invite up to three equally mental mates into a range of different arenas for multiplayer showdowns.

Nothing says I hate you like a wild electric monkey. You agree?

It's a race to hatch your egg first. Then you can kill enemies!

Roll your egg over pieces of fruit to feed it. Don't you know that's how baby birds are born?

Be careful or you'll find yourself on the receiving end of a severe tongue lashing

CVG OPINION

Unconventional and mad as a bag of hedgehogs. Too strange to be a huge hit, but hardcore platform game fans will love its entertaining eccentricity. **Mike**

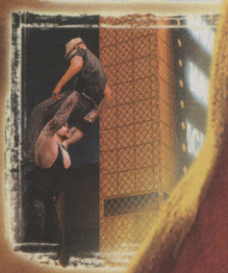
WE LOVE
- Barmy hatchling allies with super-attacks
- It's totally insane
- Simple to pick up and play

WE HATE
- Unoriginal look
- It feels very kiddie

EXCITE METER: OH BABE! / Yes! / Mmm... / Tingling / Zzzz...

CVG GAMES

BECOME A LEGEND



"...the wrestling game to die for..."
Nintendo Official Magazine
May 2003

"...yet another smash-hit WWE title..."
C&VG – June 2003

WrestleMania XIX

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FINAL FANTASY

WITH FOUR FF GAMES A-COMING, THE ALE AND BEARDS ARE FLOWING ON ALL FORMATS BAR XBOX

■ PUBLISHER
SQUARE/ENIX
■ DEVELOPER
SQUARE/ENIX
■ OUT: NOVEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

In this lighter, faster companion to FFX, two years have passed since the defeat of Sin. Yuna has joined the Gullwings, a high-flying group of sphere hunters, jetting through old and new areas of Spira alike.

WWW.FFX2.COM

UPDATE!

A battle view at the high point of an Active Link mission

Haute couture is apparently one of the Dress Spheres

FINAL FANTASY X-2

Every couple of years, the most venerable RPG resolutely fails to live up to its name, trotting out an eagerly awaited sequel. But this time it's more like something old, something new, as FFX-2 brings back old systems with a new spin.

To the surprise of many, the fully turn-based battles and sphere grid of FFX are history. In their place, welcome back, well, history. The now classic active system is in effect, and running at such a speed that battles are brief affairs, often with little time for conscious thought. But spicing up the mix is a dynamic job system involving Dress Spheres, which allow for mid-battle job changes. Better yet, change your suit and attributes, and skills and abilities also make the switch. That makes for frantic, but entertaining conflict. How good does that sound?

The first of a handful of stunning new Spira locales

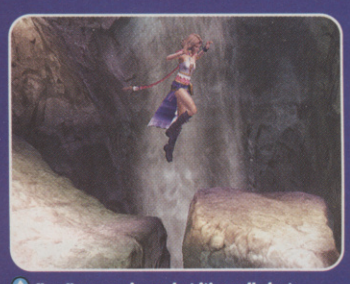
Yuna learns how the audience felt about her singing

MISSION POSSIBLE

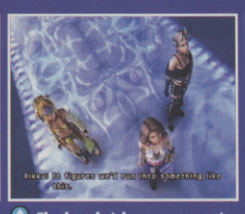
As Yuna roams with the sphere-hunting Gullwings, the choice of engagement is completely your own. Certain missions qualify as Active Links, or tasks which propel the story forward. Complete enough of those and your Story Level goes up a notch, taking the plot with it. But there is a host of other activities to dally with, some of which involve Event Spheres, while others simply show off the changed world of Spira.

You'll find quite a few new sights, but there's old ground to re-explore, as well. Some of the areas feature too many recycled vistas, but that's to be expected with such short development turnaround. Still, a cheeky approach to the RPG makes this not-sequel a must.

A Calypso retreat characterises the newer softer side of FF: X-2's environments


Yes, Yuna can jump, but it's really just window dressing. Hey, dig the boots!

Each Dress Sphere change causes a costume switch as well


The heroic trio cops a popstar pose. Can I have an autograph?

A lovely, softer look for the terminally gothic Paine

FINAL FANTASY XI

PC CD ROM · PS2 · UPDATE!

FFX-2's changeable job classes, active battles and open narrative also show up online in FFXI on PS2 and PC.

The online adventure displays the hallmark colourful spells and battles, bolstered by simple party-building mechanics and trade systems. Teamwork is essential, leading to rampant player cooperation. Random adventuring generates experience and power for your country, while primary missions create the most sprawling Fantasy yet.

Who wants to fight all the time? Anyone fancy a quick game of DOAX?

Battles are active and very graphics-heavy. Try this in EverQuest!

CVG OPINION

The change of pace is a gamble, but the job system is great. It's a shame this isn't a new game in its own right, but this could still be a fun diversion. **Alex P**

WE LOVE
- Lighthearted change of pace from FFX's super-seriousness
- Selecting missions at random

WE HATE
- Recycled elements from FFX
- Battle scenes could be over too quickly for strategy fans

PUBLISHER
NINTENDO
DEVELOPER
SQUARE ENIX
OUT: OCTOBER 31

ONLINE GAMING x4

IN A NUTSHELL

Final Fantasy returns to Nintendo as a multiplayer action game. Cooperative play saves the day in an epic battle as up to four players travel the world in a caravan to save mankind from a poisonous mist.

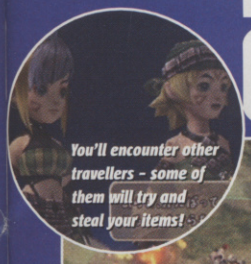
WWW.NINTENDO.COM

UPDATE!

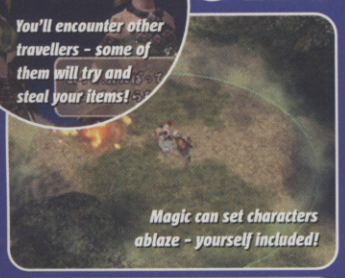
Amazing water effects help make it one of the best-looking FFs

Two players are better than one. Four players are better than two

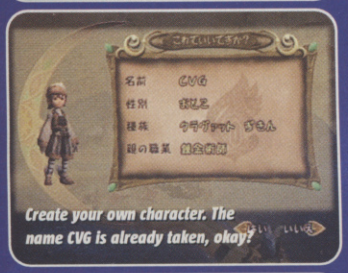
FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES



You'll encounter other travellers – some of them will try and steal your items!



Magic can set characters ablaze – yourself included!



Create your own character. The name CVG is already taken, okay?

This overhead map connects various areas of the world

Crystal Chronicles follows in the footsteps of FFXI, in that it takes Final Fantasy to new territory.

CVG's recent playtest of the Japanese version reveals a dungeon crawler in which four players battle beasts in real time, collecting keys to unlock doors and advance through the stage. Defeat the dungeon boss and you gain access to new areas of the world.

Controls and gameplay have been kept simple. A single button is used for all actions, with the L and R triggers are used to cycle between available attacks, items and spells. Magic requires that you merely collect elemental orbs that are dropped by enemies. When tossed, an orb releases its characteristic spell that can be combined with spells from other players for big effects.

For multiplayer mode, each player is required to have a Game Boy Advance. The GBA is used in place of the regular controller with the mini-screen used to display menus, radar and statistics. You'll be looking between the television and GBA as you play.

FINAL FANTASY GAIDEN

Those expecting a dramatic single-player experience will be disappointed. Even in single-player mode, the story is limited to background information on the world and an occasional encounter with another caravan while moving about the world map. Characters you encounter on the road and in town are there mainly to exchange items.

The Square Enix artistic touch isn't missing, though. Memorable character designs and fantastic artwork for the world combine with screen-filling lighting and transparency effects to make this among the best-looking FF games ever. The soundtrack also lives up to the legacy, with peaceful music for the dungeon sections and a really catchy opening theme.

Townsfolk offer a bit of dialogue, but there isn't a lot of story going down

Trekking through the lands. Cutscenes are mainly used in the introduction

Male, female and other – the choice is yours. Hey, we're not hung up on gender

FF TACTICS

GAMEBOY ADVANCE UPDATE!

With FFCC not due out until next year, Nintendo fans will have to use Tactics on GBA to hold them off.

Thankfully, Square Enix cut no corners in its GBA debut. This title offers hours and hours of the same complex strategy that we fell in love with in the original, along with an imaginative storyline that truly puts you into the game. Look forward to a review shortly.

Any game that begins with a snowball fight is okay with us!

Classic characters and classic strategy on the go. Looking good!

Your caravan departs to take on the dreaded death mist. Don't forget to hold your breath!

CVG OPINION

We're loving it so far. Single-player offers up a unique gaming experience, but get past the hurdles and multiplayer is where it's at. **Anoop**

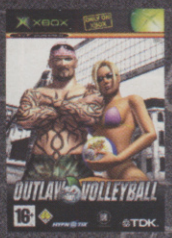
WE LOVE

- Unique gameplay system
- Classy looking, even for FF
- Awesome art and music

WE HATE

- Looking down at the GBA
- Perhaps a little too simple

OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL



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HYPNOTIX

TDK mediactive

The Arse celebrate putting one past Barthez

■ PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
■ DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS
■ OUT: OCTOBER 31

ONLINE GAMING x8

WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/CLUBFOOTBALL

CLUB FOOTBALL

How's this for trying to topple FIFA and Pro Evo's crown? Instead of releasing a spanking new footie game, Codemasters is releasing 17 new footie games!

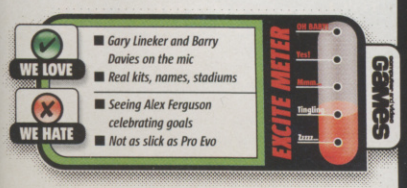
Come October store shelves will be swamped with Club Football, a brand of football titles tailored to individual clubs. Seventeen elite European clubs have been picked to have their own Club Football game, including Man Utd, Arsenal, Chelsea, Aston Villa, Leeds, Liverpool, Celtic, Rangers and Real Madrid.

So why have a football game tailored to one club? The idea is that each title will reward fans with extra information on their favourite team. Winning competitions gets you video clips of historic moments from the club's past, plus a heap of other rewards. And if you're a real fan, you can even create yourself as a player and join the squad.

Ultimately, how the game plays should be the deciding factor on whether you buy it or not. From what we've seen so far there are some nice touches – like the managers leaping off the benches when the team scores and Barry Davies on commentary – but on the field, all we can say at this stage is must try harder.

Admire your trophies in all their jagged glory

Oliver Kahn't quite reach that one!



■ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
■ DEVELOPER BEEP INDUSTRIES
■ OUT: OCTOBER 31

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Xbox exclusive that turns platform game conventions on their head – Voodoo Vince must mutilate himself to defeat enemies. Instead of avoiding perils, you have to make use of them. Go play with a chainsaw...

WWW.MICROSOFT.COM

Shocking! Vince gets struck by lightning

Voodoo Vince

Voodoo Vince has got a host of abilities that most platform stars can only dream of. Want an example? When was the last time you saw Mario cutting himself in half with a chainsaw to defeat a Goomba? See, Vince is tougher than most, and he has a party bag of other crazy stuff to prove it. Your eyes are never gonna believe this...

CALL SOCIAL SERVICES!

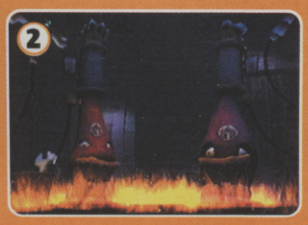
So why is Vince so keen to hack off his limbs? Answer: because he's a Voodoo doll that's used to having pins stuck in him to inflict pain on enemies. In true voodoo style Vince uses this trick to defeat enemies and bosses, but first he must inflict the damage upon himself.

Simple pitfalls that other platform heroes would run away from, Vince just laps up. Instead of avoiding things like fire or a heavy weight that might drop from above, Vince must seek out such pain-causing perils. It's not always easy though, there are also plenty of platforming puzzles to solve before you're allowed to progress.

GETTING AROUND

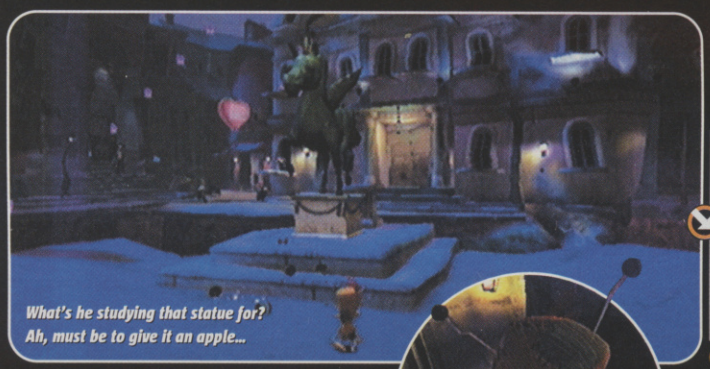
Before you get to dismember limbs, you'll need to prove your platforming prowess to reach new areas and solve some tricky puzzles. Check these out.

Vince sets himself on fire and runs through the streets. But why?



Petrol pumps on fire? A burning Vince to the rescue, Backdraft-style!

With the pumps removed, Vince powers up the steamroller. Ooh, could be nasty...



What's he studying that statue for? Ah, must be to give it an apple...

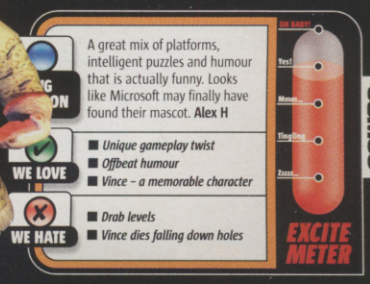
One apple later, and the hind legs lift Vince up

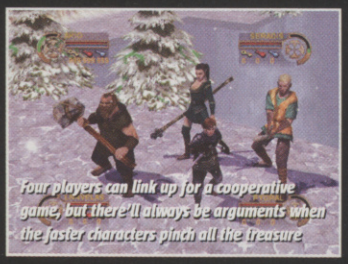
Vince demonstrates a bear trap to a group of onlookers...

The detail and design of Vince is pretty impressive

Under his voodoo curse the enemies instantly feel the effects of the trap

A huge dino-skeleton boss. Nasty





Four players can link up for a cooperative game, but there'll always be arguments when the faster characters pinch all the treasure

■ PUBLISHER ATARI
■ DEVELOPER ATARI
■ OUT: NOV 2003

GAMECUBE PS2

ONLINE GAMING x4

WWW.ATARI.COM

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS HEROES

What is it with evil sorcerers? No sooner has some brave soul banished them to inter-dimensional exile than a dumbass cleric pops up and sets them free.

Honestly, sometimes you wonder why heroes bother getting out of bed in the morning...

Dungeons & Dragons Heroes sees you hacking and slashing your way across a dark fantasy land, killing all manner of spiders, skeletons and hobgoblins in your quest to return badass conjuror Kaedin to his magical prison.

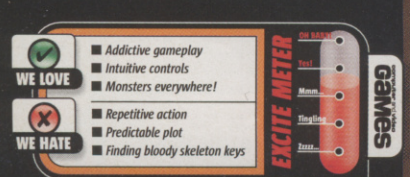
With the option to choose between a human fighter, a rogue halfling, a wizard elf and a dwarf cleric, up to four players can tackle the adventure in a Gauntlet stylee, using the heroes' unique abilities and devastating spells to dispatch the undead and collect treasure.

Like the Dungeons & Dragons role-playing games of old, you can develop your characters' stats and abilities by earning experience points during battle, in turn giving you access to magical attacks and fearsome finishing moves that are essential for defeating the hulking bosses.

With intuitive controls that allow you to battle multiple enemies and an endless stream of monsters to mash, Dungeon & Dragons Heroes promises to be a fun, no-brainer death fest that will appeal to fans of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance and other beefed-up fantasy romps.

The action can get quite bloody, with the heroes hacking the monsters into little gory bits

Some characters are more adept at unleashing mystical powers than others...



GREGORY HORROR SHOW: SOUL COLLECTOR

■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM
■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM
■ OUT: NOVEMBER 21

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Mixing up the stylish looks of PaRappa The Rapper and the creepy action of Resident Evil, Gregory Horror Show is what would happen if Tim Burton tried his hand at survival horror games.

WWW.CAPCOM.COM

UPDATE!

The Patchwork Cat, aka Neko Zombie, will gladly hand over her soul

A depressed cat with its eyes and lips stitched together, a sleazy pink lizard that fantasises about drawing blood and a two-faced, boss-eyed mouse intent on human sacrifice... Don't be fooled by its cutesy looks, Gregory Horror Show ain't for kids.

HOTEL HORROR

The game begins with the square-headed hero arriving at a mysterious hotel after becoming lost in the woods. On going to sleep, the reluctant guest comes face to face with the Grim Reaper who informs him that he must collect lost souls from the weirdos living in the hotel if he hopes to find his way home.

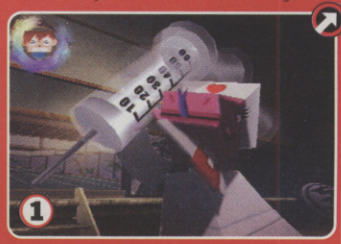
The game itself plays much like Resident Evil, with the hero collecting items, solving puzzles and munching on green herbs to boost his energy. Peering through keyholes is essential for spying on other guests and discovering their weaknesses, and stealth also plays an important part as you creep up on other characters to spring your nasty traps.

With an eerie soundtrack, disturbing set pieces and some satisfying puzzles to solve, Gregory's Horror Show demonstrates that you don't need blood, guns and gore to make players feel as if they've stepped into a living nightmare.

Gregory the hotel owner and his naughty nephew James will pester you at every turn

REAL HORROR SHOW

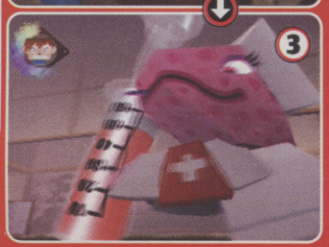
If you steal a soul and meet its owner again on your travels, they'll try to drain your energy by unleashing a scary horror show that messes with your mind. Let the show begin...

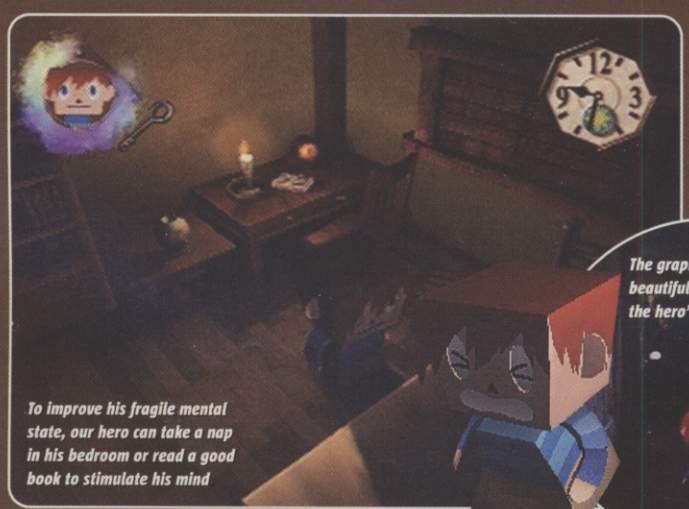


Catherine the lizard corners our chunky hero and knocks him to the ground

...and sucks out a gallon of blood. Her nurse's uniform is pretty kinky for a reptile

Once down, she plunges a syringe into his blockhead...

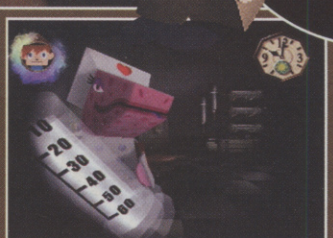




To improve his fragile mental state, our hero can take a nap in his bedroom or read a good book to stimulate his mind

The graphics are beautifully stylish. Check out the hero's 'flat top.' Groan!

When you've collected a soul, visit Death in your dreams to hand over the merchandise



Peep through keyholes to spy on other characters and discover their weaknesses

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MONEY TO BE MADE.
20 MISFITS TO MANAGE.

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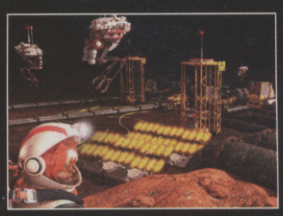

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A TAKE-TWO COMPANY

PUBLISHER
EIDOS
DEVELOPER
PARADOX
OUT: NOVEMBER 14

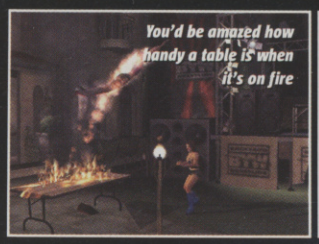
ONLINE GAMING

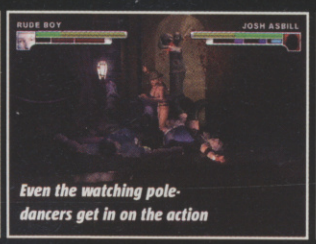
IN A NUTSHELL

Hands-on test with Eidos's demented wrestling outing. Use insane moves, weapons and destructible scenery to batter your foes into unconsciousness and become the 'King of Hardcore'. It's not mild.

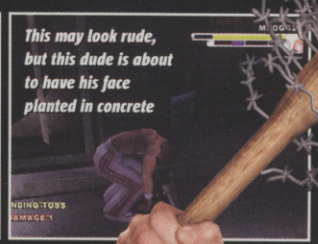
WWW.BYWGAME.COM

UPDATE!

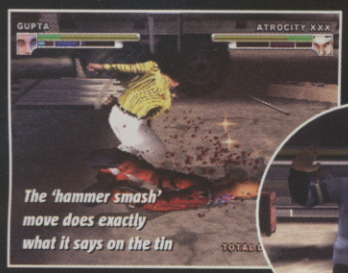

You'd be amazed how handy a table is when it's on fire



Even the watching pole-dancers get in on the action


This may look rude, but this dude is about to have his face planted in concrete

BACKYARD WRESTLING
DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME



The 'hammer smash' move does exactly what it says on the tin

America likes its 'crazes'. Pogs, Pokémon and Ninja Turtle skateboards have all stolen attention time from generations of impressionable youths.

Backyard Wrestling, best described as Jackass meets WWE, is the latest brand to sweep the western world. Except this time, it grabs the meaning of 'craze' by the jugular – it's crazier than playing Russian roulette with a rocket launcher...

BLOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR

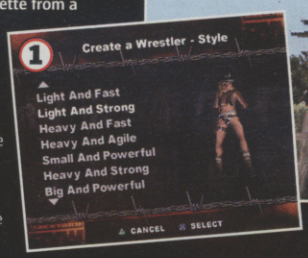
Developer Paradox has attempted to meld the 'realism' of WWE (pardon?) with the fantastical lunacy of Mortal Kombat and Tao Feng. You play as a real-life wrestler (or a created one, if you want) and compete for the accolade of hardcore champ through the backyards, stripclubs and slaughterhouses of small town Yanksville. The moves on offer are technically feasible – eye gouges, pile-drivers and spinning bulldogs can all be achieved by the pros, no matter how insane – but it's the amount of blood being spattered about gratuitously that drags this kicking and screaming into the grounds of video game sensationalism.

Backyard offers a more technical and harder-to-master experience than the WWE games, with timing the key to success. It's also considerably faster and less sluggish than the Legends Of Wrestling series. Despite a suspect lack of depth (unlockable bonus modes might redeem this however), basic multiplayer and a few niggling flaws, we can see this one banging a sizeable dent in WWE's hold on the wrestling gaming crown. Great metal soundtrack too. Bring it on, dudes... CVG

DIXIE CHICKS

As with all good wrestling games, Backyard lets you create your very own dude or dudette from a range of body shapes and fighting styles.

However, the library of moves seemed to pale in comparison to the ones featured in the WWE titles. Still, at least its ladies' breasts are bigger. Ho hum.

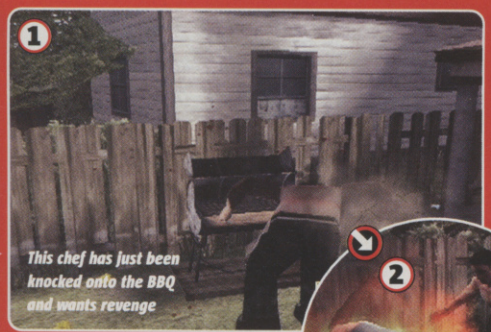


First thing, choose your preferred style of fighting...

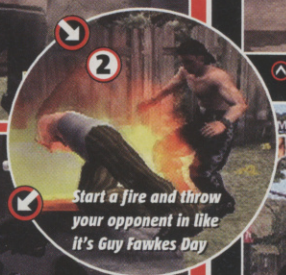
Then make the breasts large... go get 'em cowgirl!

OI, NUTTER!

This game, like the sport, is utterly mental. As well as performing all kinds of potentially bone-snapping manoeuvres (how does elbow-dropping off 25-foot-high roofs sound?), your fighters can beat foes with barbed wire clubs, smash pots over their heads, hell, even set them on fire with gasoline. And don't expect the spectators to hold back when it comes to electrocuting you... eek!



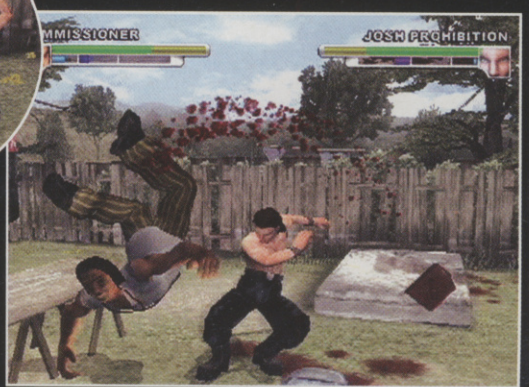
This chef has just been knocked onto the BBQ and wants revenge



Start a fire and throw your opponent in like it's Guy Fawkes Day

Smash foes into buildings and watch as they're buried in timber

Miss Bits gets a right old knees-up. Pun definitely intended...



Commissioner is commissioned a good old hip toss. Take that and party

How much blood? Answer: so much. It makes WWE look fake. Hang on a sec...

CVG OPINION
Difficult to pick up and needs a bit of polishing, but Backyard Wrestling should easily have enough character and violence to become a hit. **Stephen**

WE LOVE
- Lots of blood and grizzly moves
- Tons of unlockable goodies including saucy pop videos

WE HATE
- Frustrating gameplay from the off until you crack the moves
- Dodgy collision detection

You aren't just controlling the plot of a movie...

...You're determining the fate of the world

SCOURGE OF WORLDS

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® ADVENTURE

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Unlike anything you've ever experienced, Scourge of Worlds - A Dungeons & Dragons® Adventure is a revolutionary concept in DVD technology - a completely CGI-animated film that allows you to guide the story at crucial points creating the adventure of a lifetime. The decisions you make control the destiny of the characters as you guide them through more than 200 possible fates.

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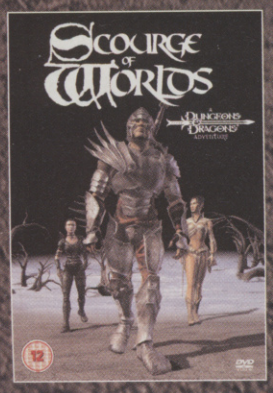

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- PUBLISHER ATARI
- DEVELOPER EDEN STUDIOS
- OUT: OCTOBER 31

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Magical action-adventure starring the winsome heroine Kya, thrust into a strange world of peaceful Nativs and evil Wolfen. Use wind tunnels and magic as you bid to save your half-brother from doom.

WWW.ATARI.COM

UPDATE!

Well, g'day sport, know the way back to Oz?

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

Kya seems to be a hybrid of just about every fantasy/fairytale story ever written.

It begins like The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe, briefly turns into Alice In Wonderland, gets in on The Time Machine and swallows a few essential ingredients of classic movies like The NeverEnding Story and Return Of The Jedi, too. Jump into a magical world, rescue your half-brother from an evil overlord (who incidentally turns out to be your father) and restore peaceful harmony to the ultra-cutesy race of the Nativs. It couldn't be any easier...

WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Despite being a generic platform action-adventure at heart, Kya looks like it should have enough to warrant a lengthy look. For a start, it's blessed with large spoonfuls of sugary charm (even more so than Rayman 3, of which this shares many gameplay similarities). The mysterious lands are gorgeously iridescent and the friendly Nativs are some of the cuddliest creatures ever to grace a video game. There are a few other neat ideas too, such as the use of wind tunnels to 'skydive' to new areas and platforms. Add into the equation an emphasis on fighting combos and the ability to outwit nasties using the scenery, and you've got a playable and meaty adventure outing in the offing.

Whether this is going to be strong enough to shake off the competition (the anticipated Beyond Good And Evil, for example) remains to be seen, but we're confident to suggest that it will be more than simply a load of hot wind. Keep those beadies peeled.

WINDY PANTS

The lands you'll encounter are divided by wind tunnels, which you'll need to 'fly' through to access various levels.

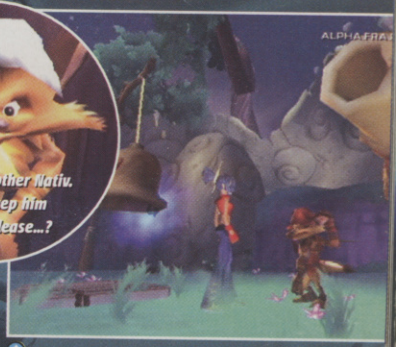
The sensation of moving in wind is very convincing, with some excellent graphical effects. The controls will take some getting used to however, but they sure make for a nice alternative to conventional platform jumping.

Jumping into tunnels is like a skydiving extreme sports game

You'll have a few obstacles to avoid. This looks a bit like someone's throat

Pop down to the local shops to purchase some helpful items

Aw, another Nativ. Can I keep him mum, please...?

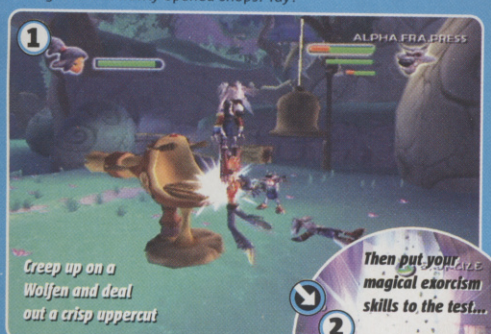


Hello little Nativ - have a go at making friendly chit-chat with a cuddly creature

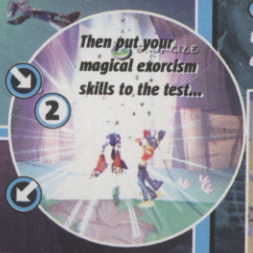
THE EXORCIST

The anarchic Wolfen are the main creatures that you'll have to battle on your travels. However, they're really just Nativs put under the spell of Kya's father, Brazul. And you're there to save them...

Once you've duffed them up, you can exorcise them back to their former selves using magical orbs. This inevitably increases the Nativ population by a few more smiling faces, and enables you to purchase extra goodies in newly opened shops. Yay!



Creep up on a Wolfen and deal out a crisp uppercut



Then put your magical exorcism skills to the test...

...and hey presto, your very own Nativ. How sweet...

Kya could probably teach Lara a thing or two about fighting

On the run from strange spiky balls. As you do...

Use stealth to sneak past the menacing Wolfen. Shhhhh!

CVG OPINION

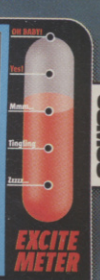
Lara Croft meets Rayman with the look of a Rare-developed game. Though it seems tough, it's playable, fun, and pretty to look at, too. **Stephen**

WE LOVE

- Eye-tickling visuals
- Massive, atmospheric levels to stomp and soar around in

WE HATE

- Can be frustrating in places
- Relatively generic action
- Very, very windy



SSX 3

- PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
- DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
- OUT: OCTOBER 24

IN A NUTSHELL

Free-roaming sequel to the top snowboarding game that spins the format on its head, giving you carte blanche to explore three huge peaks and cherry-pick your favourite powder-surfing events at will.

XBOX GC GBA

WWW.EASPORTSBIG.COM

UPDATE!

PEAK 3
ELEVATION: 6739m
CONDITION: Clear

PEAK 1
ELEVATION: 4105m
CONDITION: Heavy Snowfall

PEAK 2
ELEVATION: 5422m
CONDITION: Clear

There's a breathtaking moment in SSX 3 when you launch yourself off the edge of a powdery bluff, soaring so high that you touch the fluffy clouds. You land in a beautiful forest, dappled sunlight caressing the tree trunks. Blissed out, you try a neat little grab trick, just for fun, then some loud-mouthed berk like Moby comes storming past and knocks you flat on your smiling face. Now that's the joy of snowboarding.

THE JOY OF SSX

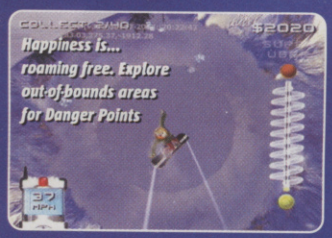
The SSX core gameplay basics remain the same. You get to race against rival boarders, compete in time trials and one-off Big Challenges and go powder-crazy on the massive trick courses. The controls still feel as instinctive and responsive as ever. The new Uber Tricks category, which introduces Tony Hawk's-style rail tricks, is an exhilarating new feature designed to encourage the creation of insane combo strings. All boarders now have fully customisable stats as well as boards and clothes and there are plenty of other cool modes including online multiplayer and Quick Play options. We've only made it down one mountain, but we can't wait to explore the rest... CVG

MOUNTAIN EXCITEMENT

Big, isn't it? By the end of the game you'll own every frosty inch of those shimmering slopes. But first you have to start small...

On the nursery peak you'll explore the back country runs and unlock Events and Challenges. To gain access to the second and third peaks you'll have to complete at least one of the major goals on each peak, including winning Medals in races and Freestyle events, collecting crystals, earning over $50,000 and completing all of the Big Challenge events. Or if you want you can just go on one big free-ride. It's up to you.

HAPPINESS



SOUTH FACE

Enjoy a frothy latte in the Lodge and customise your board and rider while you're at it

Use the ski lift to take short cuts to other courses on the mountain

CROW'S NEST

R&B

DYSFUNCTION JUNCTION

CVG OPINION

The proper sequel to SSX (Tricky was more of a rehash) is one of the most anticipated games of the year – and it looks like you should believe the hype. **Maura**

WE LOVE
- Breathtaking panoramas
- New tricks, realistic character designs and a kick-ass soundtrack

WE HATE
- Only four new characters
- Starting to look even more like Tony Hawk's on ice

Tom Clancy's GHOST RECON™ ISLAND THUNDER™

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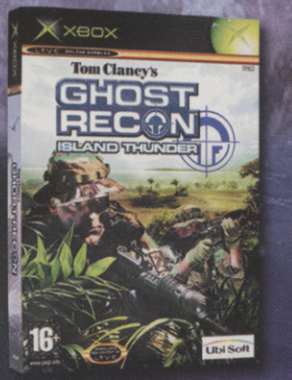

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★ Xbox Gamer UK April 2003

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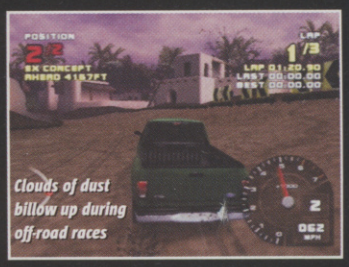


Clouds of dust billow up during off-road races

■ PUBLISHER
EMPIRE INTERACTIVE
■ DEVELOPER
RAZORWORKS
■ OUT: OCTOBER 31

PC
PS2

ONLINE GAMING

WWW.EMPIRE INTERACTIVE.COM/

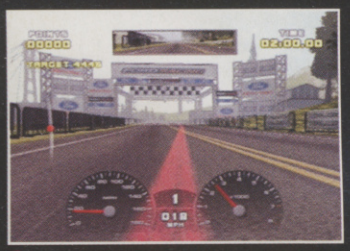
FORD RACING EVOLUTION

Let's face it – with driving games like Gran Turismo 4 and Colin McRae '04 on the horizon, Ford Racing Revolution won't set the world on fire. But for 15 quid, it's definitely worth a test drive.

Ford Racing Revolution features 32 of the company's most popular motors – from the 1968 Mustang to the latest Mustang GT Concept car – and will test your driving skills in standard races, off-road scrambles and hair-raising chases through twisting city streets. There'll even be a two-player mode for split-screen skirmishes, and the ability to collect a garage full of the finest cars ever made.

Unlocking the game's best cars depends on your success in the challenges, and collecting new motors is the key to winning later races against tough-as-nails AI opponents.

Best of all, the handling is easy and intuitive, making it an ideal alternative for casual racing fans. It may not be the prettiest game around, but Ford Racing Revolution promises to be one of this year's best budget packages. CVG



In this driving challenge you have to hug the red racing line for the entire race

There are loads of cars on offer, from beefy off-road racers to sleek city convertibles

WE LOVE
- Cheap as chips
- Lots of challenges
- Loads of cars

WE HATE
- Boring graphics
- Cheesy music
- Uninspiring courses

EXCITE METER

games

BANJO-KAZOOIE Grunty's Revenge

Banjo and Kazooie admire the cut-down view outside their home

■ PUBLISHER
THQ
■ DEVELOPER
RARE
■ OUT: OCTOBER 17

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Rare's first game for Microsoft, not on Xbox, but Game Boy Advance. Grunty's Revenge is an isometric, puzzle-filled romp with our heroes Banjo and Kazooie once again out to thwart the evil Gruntilda's plans.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

WWW.RARE.CO.UK

Banjo the bear and Kazooie the bird are in a flap because the evil Gruntilda's back and more determined to defeat our heroes than ever before.

Visually Grunty's Revenge may not be as extravagant as the N64 Banjo-Kazooie titles but this GBA version packs in a lot – levels are large and multi-layered, littered with enemies and mini-tasks. There are bosses, mini-games, secrets to find and new moves to learn.

SPREAD YOUR WINGS

Spread over six worlds with more than 60 different tasks, the adventure includes old characters like the witch doctor Mumbo Jumbo who can transform Banjo into different creatures, each with unique abilities which allow him to explore further. Nintendo has surpassed itself this time. CVG

Six worlds to explore and over 60 different tasks... Nice

MINI-MADNESS

Grunty's Revenge is packed full of mini-games that offer laughs and thrills in equal measure. They range from fishing for sheep to games of tag and pirate ship battles. Take a look at these beauties.

Collect the bugs and avoid the spikes on this long slide

Keep hold of the treasure chest the longest to win

Grab sheep with a fishing rod before the timer expires

CVG OPINION

Not as pretty as the N64 titles, but Banjo and Kazooie should make just as much noise when squeezed onto the GBA. This is looking like a winner. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Lots to do and places to explore
- Wacky cast of characters
- Mental mini-games

WE HATE
- Too much text with no speech
- Mini-games better than the main action

EXCITE METER

games

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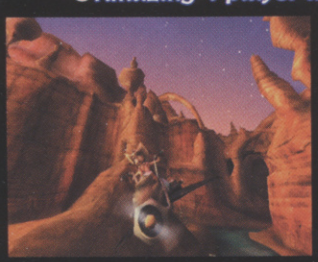

FREAKY FLYERS

www.freakyflyers.com

PlayStation.2

XBOX

MIDWAY

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■ PUBLISHER
CAPCOM
■ DEVELOPER
CAPCOM
■ OUT: NOVEMBER 7

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

In Capcom's space-bound dino-actioner, urban environments are swapped for a sci-fi setting. The latest in the franchise ramps up the survival elements at the expense of the series' trademark scares.

WWW.CAPCOM.COM/DINOCRISIS3

UPDATE!

Zipping around on your jetpack is almost as much fun as killing stuff

The claustrophobic environments make for some hair-raising close encounters

It's a dinosaur! It's in a spaceship!

The map screen is essential if you want to navigate the truly labyrinthine Ozymandius

DINO CRISIS 3

There you are, gnawing on the gnarled carcass you just picked up at the Stego-mart, absent-mindedly sucking the sinew out of your gigantic T-Rex teeth when suddenly you're zapped several millennia into the future and genetically mutated into a big stringy dino-waffle.

It's no surprise the Jurassic reprobates in Capcom's latest Dino Crisis instalment are angry.

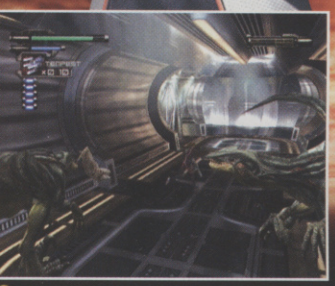
Three hundred years later, as Patrick Tyler, member of the S.O.A.R Special Ops, you must explore the desolate space station Ozymandius to discover what happened on board and where the hell the crew disappeared to. Burp.

PHAT CONTROLLER

The radical switch in setting has done more than just freshen up the franchise – it's also pretty much catapulted the game right out of the survival horror genre. With dark menacing corridors replaced by gleaming chrome and twinkling lights, the emphasis is more on action, puzzle solving and progression than set pieces and scares. Further sticking the cattle prod in the jockstrap of convention is the addition of your rear-mounted jetpack allowing nippy manoeuvring around the game's jaw-dropping environments.

The boost in speed comes in handy with Dino Crisis 3 wielding its hideously mutated and disarmingly crafty dino-pests at every opportunity. Thankfully, Capcom has implemented a gloriously slick control system aiding everything from discovery to decimation.

The only thing likely to get in the way of the hugely atmospheric entertainment at this stage is the aggressively stubborn camera, which tends to prefer pointing out architectural highlights over marauding peril. Handy if you're art boff Brian Sewell, otherwise a bit of a drag. If that's ironed out ready for release though, it might be time to declare the dinosaur hunting season well and truly open.



The dinos aren't picky about which of the playable characters they eat

MUTATION STATION

Sometimes it's good to be a geek...

Dead ends and impassable obstacles can be overcome by tapping into the ship's central computer and triggering one of its many structural transformations.

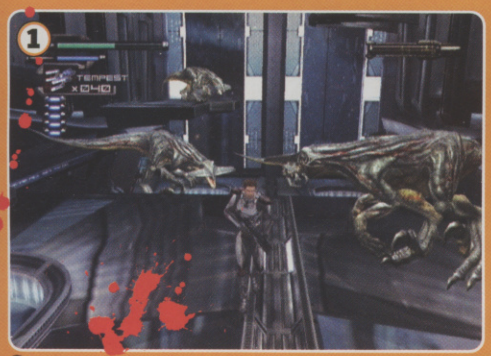
Reconfigure the ship's layout at one of the mainframe terminals

Each transformation will open up a host of new passageways to explore

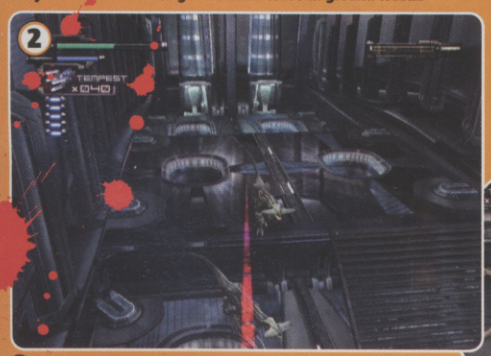
EYE OF THE TYLER

For more accurate shooting, switch to the game's first-person mode.

Make sure you're out of reach of snarling jaws though as movement is severely restricted. One of those dinos could easily have your arm off remember, which makes for a poor aim.

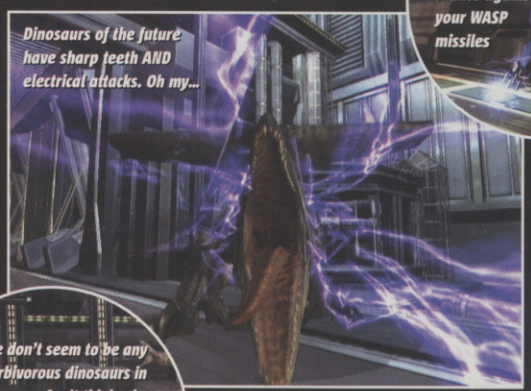


If the action starts to get a bit too tense at ground level...



...clamber up to safety and pick the enemy off at your leisure

Later events in the game will necessitate leaving the confines of the ship



Dinosaurs of the future have sharp teeth AND electrical attacks. Oh my...

Security doors don't stand a chance against your WASP missiles

There don't seem to be any herbivorous dinosaurs in this game. Can't think why

CVG OPINION

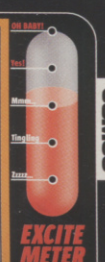
Gorgeous visuals, intense gun-blazing combat and a menacing sense of space-bound isolation – even if the idea of dinosaurs on a spaceship makes us titter. Matt

WE LOVE

- Beautiful environments
- Fast and tense jetpack action
- Elegant controls

WE HATE

- Samey enemies
- The fact it's not scary
- Camera next to useless in battle



GAMES

KIRBY AIR RIDE

Get the timing right or it's diced Kirby... though he deserves it for featuring in this game!

The A button slows the racing Kirby down for corners... and that's about it

Kirby auditions for a part in the next Zelda game

- PUBLISHER NINTENDO
- DEVELOPER HAL
- OUT: NOVEMBER 14
- ONLINE GAMING
- x4

IN A NUTSHELL

That lovable, irrepressible character Kirby turns up in one of the simplest and least demanding games since paper, scissors, stone. And you're expected to shell out hard cash for it, apparently. We'll just see about that.

WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM

Kirby has been as much a staple of Nintendo's output as a certain moustachioed plumber – so we were pleased to see the pink puffball return in a different type of game. Only that 'different' doesn't always mean 'better'.

ONE-BUTTON WONDER

Kirby Air Ride is a no-frills racer featuring two different types of event. The first, Air Ride, takes place in an insane, twisting 3D landscape, while Top Ride opts for a simpler 3D bird's-eye view. These different styles add a little variety to the game but it is the lack of overall depth which is most worrying.

Indeed, its painful simplicity is the game's main problem. Holding down the A button when approaching a bend to slow little Kirby down does not make for a very demanding experience. The City Trial mode is slightly more exciting, requiring you to race against computer characters for power-ups, but our import copy shows that it is extremely basic.

In fact, in the racing modes, it's possible to put the controller down and let Kirby bump and bash his own way round the course. True, you are unlikely to win any races this way, but the fact that you can achieve a moderate level of success without even holding the controller leaves a lot to be desired.

According to Nintendo, Kirby Air Ride is aimed squarely at the younger crowd, so its simplicity can be forgiven to a certain extent. Still, there are plenty of games that cater for the younger gamer without reverting to this level of bird-brained simplicity. Kirby or not, this isn't a title we're awaiting too keenly.

OI! I WAS USING THAT

As with all of Kirby's adventures, Kirby Air Ride allows you to steal your foe's attributes and use them against them.

For example, come across a spiky critter and one quick press on the A button will allow you to breathe in his spikes and then launch them out again like a cute, pink claymore mine.

Take a deep breath and suck up your enemy's powers

Then unleash a spiky death on unsuspecting foes

Overtake them or steal their powers

The cannon is the biggest power-up

That corner looks tight. Still, it's near impossible to fall off

CVG OPINION

Okay so it's Kirby, but it's shaping up to be nothing special and needs a good whipping. Looks to be too simplistic and dull for the majority of gamers. **Paul A**

WE LOVE

- Stealing enemy abilities in true Kirby style

WE HATE

- You can't fall off the rails
- Totally lacks any even slightly demanding elements
- Graphics are pretty shabby

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You have to ask if you want to fight other players

STAR WARS GALAXIES

AN EMPIRE DIVIDED

Battles aren't quite as frantic as this would suggest, but we live in hope

PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
VERANT
OUT: DEC, XBOX TBA

ONLINE GAMING | MMO

IN A NUTSHELL

Set just before the Battle Of Hoth, Galaxies allows you to explore the Star Wars universe like never before, as a rogue trader like Han Solo, or as a ruthless bounty hunter under the employ of the Dark Side.

PC CD ROM | XBOX PS2

WWW.STARWARSGALAXIES.COM

You'll be lucky if you get to wield a lightsaber, and zipping down the Death Star trench is out of the question. But if your ultimate Star Wars ambition is to see a dancing troupe of albino Wookiees strut their stuff in the Mos Espa Cantina, welcome to the game of your dreams.

Star Wars Galaxies could be about the best excuse there is for getting yourself hooked on a MMOG (massively multiplayer online game). Played by thousands of people simultaneously, Galaxies allows you to pick from one of eight playable races with the aim to fight and befriend your way into joining either the Rebels or the nefarious Empire. Training to become a Jedi is notoriously difficult, but with starting professions including brawlers, scouts, marksmen, medics, entertainers and artisans, there is ample scope to explore and develop until you join or set yourself up with a guild of player characters.

CAN I SHOOT YOU?

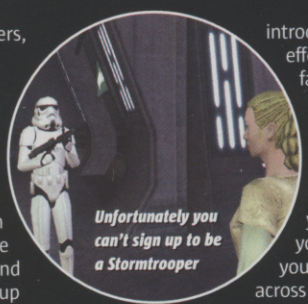
Combat is in real time, and although early on you'll be spending your time hunting what appear to be rabbits and frogs, later you can expect to join up with other players to kill the massive Krayt Dragons that roam the deserts of Tatooine. However if you want to indiscriminately kill and pillage you're sure to be disappointed; as with Verant's other MMOG EverQuest, player versus player combat is consensual – you have to ask nicely if you want to attack another player (unless you are in designated battlefields or are a member of either the Alliance or the Empire).

For those of us who've yet to experience an online RPG, Star Wars Galaxies is thankfully a less daunting introduction than most PC-based efforts, partly because it offers a familiar and friendly universe to explore. If you want to be rich, be an artisan. If you want to hunt, be a marksman. If you just want to shake your shaggy behind in some seedy bar, well, yes, you can do that too, though you'll have to find out how for yourself when the game goes live across Europe later this year.

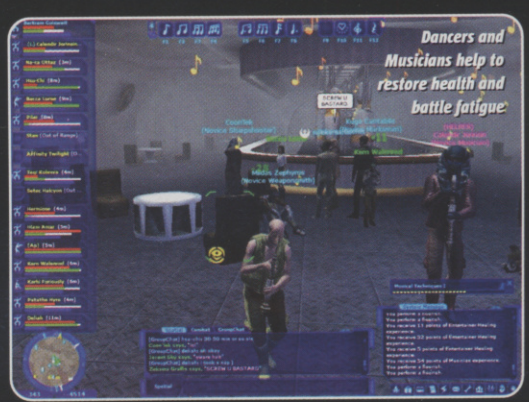
You can't fly ships just yet, not until next year, when the Space Expansion will be released

You'll have to complete some tricky missions if you want to meet Princess Leia for a drink

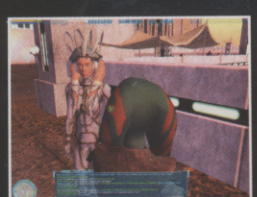
"Excuse me, do you have any soap?"



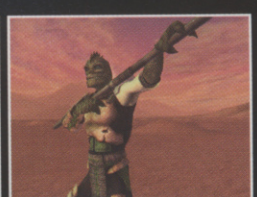
Unfortunately you can't sign up to be a Stormtrooper



Dancers and Musicians help to restore health and battle fatigue



The interface may look complicated, but it's a lot more intuitive than most MMOGs

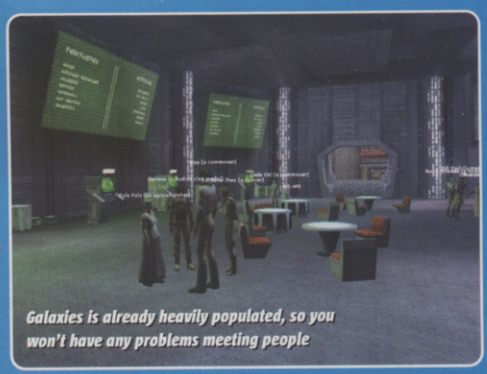


You meet a lot of strange creatures in MMOGs. He's ugly and he's got the stick to prove it

THE PHANTOM CONSOLE VERSIONS

It was assumed some time ago that Galaxies would eventually appear for the Xbox, and after Verant's success with EverQuest Online Adventures for PS2 (based on their phenomenally successful PC MMOG), hopes were high that Star Wars Galaxies would also make it onto Sony's monolith.

Alas those plans are now on hold as the team put all their efforts into fixing and expanding the PC version, which next year will see the release of the X-Wing-tastic Space Expansion add-on. Rumours persist that when the console version does appear, it will feature the best of both worlds, with third-person ground action and space-based battles. Unfortunately, we may have to wait at least another year.



Galaxies is already heavily populated, so you won't have any problems meeting people

CVG OPINION

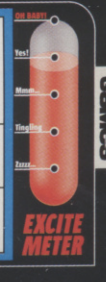
After a botched Stateside launch, Galaxies is steadily improving. When it hits these shores it could be the biggest online RPG on the planet. **Rich**

WE LOVE

- Player-run economy
- Massive environments
- Epic Empire versus Rebel battles

WE HATE

- Dancing Wookiees
- Limp-wristed PvP combat



GAMES

computer and video
GAMES

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CHALLENGE CVG ★on tour

computer and video Games VS. MTV MUSIC TELEVISION®

Team CVG visits MTV's London studio to test its game expert's mad skillz

TEAM CVG VS ALEX ZANE

FOR A CHALLENGE THIS COOL WE HAD TO TAKE ALONG EA'S AWESOME SSX 3!

We like to think of ourselves as media darlings here at CVG. Not a day goes by without invitations to fancy-pants parties and celebrity-packed soirées flooding in. So when MTV called us up and challenged us to take on Alex Zane, the presenter of its movie and videogame review show Screenplay, we checked the office diary and found a little gap for them.

"This will be sweet," said Graeme. "We'll waltz in, whip this lad at EA's ace SSX 3, and then schmooze with some pop stars." Just another day at the office, then.

This boy Alex Zane though, turns out he can actually play. "I started my videogaming career with an Acorn Electron in 1984," he said, before listing an impressive array of hardware he had cut his teeth on. Might not be as simple as it seemed...

Alex busts out the rock and roll as Graeme loses the first round. The man's an SSX master!

1 ROUND ONE: SNOW JOKE

In the practice rounds Alex busted out an obscene amount of tricks and checked out SSX3's enhanced trick system. Graeme was too busy trying to spot celebrities. "I think I saw Abs!" he shrieked as he faceplanted into the white stuff again. The first challenge was a straight race down the face of the new three-peaked mountain. Things began well for Graeme, pushing Alex into a snowdrift and scampering away. MTV's finest videogaming star was not to be outdone though, and he romped home in first place with a sparkling trail of wicked tricks in his wake. "I failed my uni exams 'cos I was playing SSX Tricky all the time," he admitted. Who says games don't get you anywhere?

That's definitely Graeme's finger – Alex wasn't really that excited

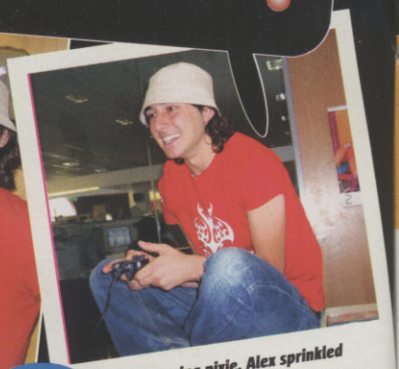
2 ROUND TWO: THE SLIPPERY SLOPE TO SECOND PLACE

Now it's on. "You might work at MTV and get to hang about with pop stars all day," said Graeme, determination flashing in his eyes, "but I stay in all the time and play games until my eyes bleed." By concentrating on his carves around the sharp curves of the mountainside he built a considerable lead. Back in the pack, Alex had attracted the wrath of the other boarders. "They're picking on me!" he whined, getting pushed around like a nun in a moshpit. Safely ahead of the carnage, Graeme slid smoothly across the finish line in first place. He's done it again!

3 ROUND THREE: RESTORED TO CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

On the mountainside the snow drifted like frosty feathers. In the roasting MTV studio Graeme and Alex were prickled with beads of tense sweat. The gaming pride of two great institutions was on the line. As the trees and rocks thickened however, Graeme began to chip away at the lead. By picking out a way through the trees Alex was unwittingly showing our lad the plum route. The finish line loomed, with Alex and Graeme neck and neck – and then as if carried on the wings of angels, Graeme nipped ahead at the death to snatch glory!

Neither of them can quite believe the result



Like a gaming pixie, Alex sprinkled magic dust all over his tricks

CHALLENGE CVG WINNER CVG WIN! CHALLENGE CVG WINNER

This looks cosy but they were slapping backs and grunting like real hairy blokes

THE FINAL RESULT: TEAM CVG WIN!

"You came from nowhere!" moaned Alex. While Alex is the undisputed style guru, busting out more tricks than David Blaine, Graeme's determined racing and subtle snow-carving saw him through to victory.

It was the closest finish we've ever seen in a CVG Challenge. "You did a great job, pal," said Graeme. "You are the trick master." "Thanks mate," replied Alex, "but your wicked carves deserve recognition." Overcome by mutual gaming respect the two embraced. That's what we do best at CVG and MTV – spread the love of videogames to the whole world. Rock on!

MUSIC, GAMES & VIDEOS!

We thought Alex might be a bit mince, but he proved that he can talk the talk *and* walk the walk. See, that's what Screenplay is all about – honest opinions on the latest releases by people who really know their stuff. They give the latest games to proper rock and pop stars like the Fun Lovin' Criminals to get their expert opinion on them. After all, what else do they do between gigs?

On top of that, Screenplay covers the latest and hottest new movies and DVDs. It's on every Friday at 5.30pm on MTV, and we're giving it the hardcore CVG seal of approval!

COME ON! HAVE IT!

CHALLENGE CVG ★on tour

We're sick and tired of having people round to the office only for them to get massacred. It's too easy for us, see?

To give you a chance we'll forego our home advantage. We want to bring the pain to your turf! Think you can take on the might of team CVG? Then send in the form, lock down your living room and get ready for a showdown you'll never forget.

★HELLO, MY NAME IS: .....

★BUT YOU MUST CALL ME ..... [nickname] ★AND I'M ..... [age]

★I AM THE BEST AT: ..... [game name]

★MY ADDRESS IS: .....

★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: ..... ★EVENING TELEPHONE NO: .....

★EMAIL: .....

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computer and video games
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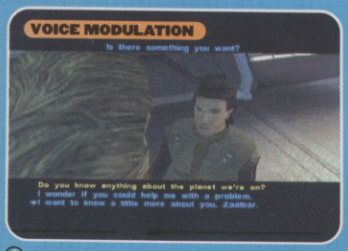
GET THE MOST OUT OF THE GAMES YOU'VE GOT

EXTENDED PLAY

Lost the Force in Knights Of The Old Republic? All boxed in in The Great Escape? Who cares when you can cheat? Didn't anyone ever tell you there are ways, and there are ways...

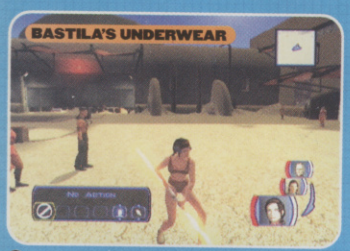
STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC



Have a second controller plugged into port four. Play the game and press either Black or White to change the pitch of people's voices

Equip the Sith Armour to a party member. That way, when you 'exchange' it for papers you get to keep it – and still get the papers

Equip the Sand People outfits to a party member and you won't lose them after finishing the Sand People section on Tatooine



Equip Bastila with a Jedi robe and she'll be wearing bra and panties when you un-equip her. Equip her with a Dark Jedi robe and when you un-equip her she'll be wearing kinkier underwear

VIEWTIFUL JOE

CAPTAIN BLUE
Finish the game on Ultra V

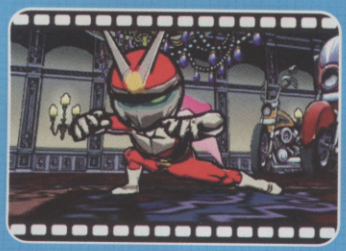
ALASTOR
Finish the game on V Rated

GIRLFRIEND
Finish the game on Adult

ULTRA V RATED MODE
Finish the game on V Rated

V RATED
Finish the game on Adult

VIEWTIFUL JOE WORLD VIDEO
Finish the game on Kids



TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER

Finish all mission objectives in single-player before the cheats are usable. In gameplay press Back and then one of the following:

BIG HEADS
A, X, B, Y, A

BIG BODIES
B, B, Y, X, X, A

CHICKEN EXPLOSIVES
X, X, Y, A, B

PAPER MODE
B, A, X, Y, A

SLOW MODE
Y, Y, B, X, A

HIGH-PITCHED VOICE
X, A, Y, B, X

SILENT HILL 3

DOUGLAS IN PANTS
Beat the game once, highlight New Game Extra and press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Circle, X. Select Difficulties and a sound will confirm entry.

ACTION LEVEL EXTREME
Beat the game on Hard. You can keep beating the game on Extreme as the level goes all the way up to ten.

EXTRA OPTIONS
On the options menu hold down:
L1+R1+L2+R2

FLAMETHROWER
Beat the game twice, or beat it once using ranged rather then melee weapons, to kill as many enemies as possible.

LIGHTSABER
Beat the game by killing enemies using melee weapons rather than ranged weapons.

BRUTE FORCE

CONFED MARINE
At the end of Welcome To The 23rd, look in all the buildings to find the DNA canister that unlocks the confed marine. You can also get this from mission six, The Lonesome Death of Edward Kingman. It's in a building near the end on a desk.

FERAL COLONIST
Shortly after you rescue Brutus on the second mission, look for a door with a crack down the middle in a small room. Blast it open with the shotgun to get the DNA.

FERAL OUTCAST
The DNA can be found to the left just before the foggy valley in Cemetery Gates.

SEER FOLLOWER
In Hunting For Shadoon, take the other path before the second teleporter. You'll find the DNA on an altar.

MILITIA
In Terrorist Ghetto, your mission is to blow up a computer. The DNA is sitting in front of it. You can also get this canister at the end of Super Mutant.

OUTCAST SHAMAN
In Ship Graveyard, there are some huts in the last area. Enter the first hut on the right to get the DNA.

SEER PRIEST
Near the start of Return to Osiris is a large hologram of a head. Walk straight into it to get the DNA.

FERAL SHAMAN
In Chapter 3 of Seers Of The Bayou you will get a choice between crossing a rope bridge or following the path around the tree. Go around the tree and break open the door at the top to get the DNA.

GUNTHAR GHENT
After killing the target in Squirm, look for the DNA in a hut nearby.

SHADOON
At the end of Kill Shadoon, you can get the canister from the corpse of the priest.

FIRE HOUND
At the very end of Abbadon before getting in the extraction teleporter, walk to the edge of the lava and look around for the DNA.

MCTAVISH
In Seti 2049, after you kill McTavish you can find his DNA in the same area.

SHRIKE SOLDIER
Look in the tunnel (where the ship blasts off from) at the very end of Hostile Reception to find the DNA.

YOUR BEST TIPS

If you've got a star-quality tip that you want to share or if you'd like our resident expert Barny to answer a query, send it into us at:

CVGTIPS@DENNIS.CO.UK

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SHRIKE HEAVY
In Ripe for Plunder, towards the end is a building with the last weapon crate inside. Blow up the door in here and you'll find the DNA behind it.

SHRIKE HOUND
In Shrike Rogues, get onto the roof of the temple and you'll find the DNA.

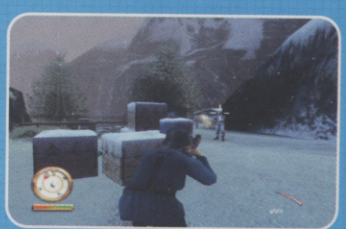
HUNTER LORD
At the very end of The Anvil, when you find the shield projectors at the back, jump across to the ledge behind the back one and you'll find the DNA.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

LEVEL SELECT
At the main menu press:
Y, R, Y, X, Y, R, X, L, X, X, X, Y

AMMO AND HEALTH
With a gun and health kit in your inventory pause the game and press:
Y, X, L, R, L, R, X, Y, L, Y, Y, R

FMV
At the main menu press:
L, L, Y, X, X, R, R, Y, Y, X, L, R



THE GREAT ESCAPE

LEVEL SELECT
At the main menu press Square, L2, Square, R2, Circle, R1, Circle, L1, L2, R2, Circle, Square

AMMO AND HEALTH
With a gun and health pack in your inventory pause the game and press Square, Circle, L2, R1, R2, L1, Circle, Square, L1, R1, L1, R1

FMV
At the main menu press L2, L1, Square, Circle, Circle R2, R1, Square, Square, Circle, L1, R1

OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL

ALL CHARACTER
At the character select screen in Exhibition mode hold L1 and press Left, White, Right, White.

BIG BOOBIE MODE
During gameplay in Exhibition hold down L1 and tap in B, Up, Up, B, Y

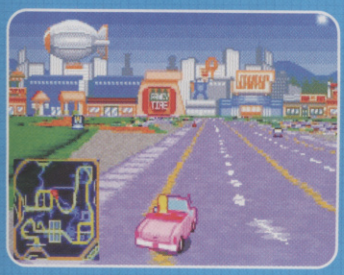
BIG HEADS
During game play in Exhibition hold down L1 and press B, A, B, Y

MAX STATS
During gameplay in Exhibition hold down R1 and press Left, White, Right, White

TIME BOMBS
During game play in Exhibition hold down L1 and press A, B, B, Y, A+X

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

In the password screen, to unlock nearly everything enter: Maggie, Willy, Bart, Chief Wiggum, Apu, Moe, Krusty, Barney



SPACE CHANNEL 5: ULALA'S COSMIC ATTACK

AUTOMATIC MODE
During gameplay hold down L+R then quickly press Up, Left, A, Left, A, Down, Right, B, Right, B

DEAD TO RIGHTS

Enter the following codes at the new game screen to open a variety of options:

MASTER CODE
Hold L1, L2, R1, and R2 and then press Down, Left, Down, Triangle, Down

LEVEL SELECT
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Down, Left, Down, Triangle, Down

10,000 BULLETS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Up, Left, Down, Right, Circle

ARMOR
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Up, Up, Up, Square, Down

HUMAN SHIELDS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Square, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Square

INVISIBLE
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Triangle, Triangle, Up, Up, Triangle

STRONGER MELEE ATTACKS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Down, Circle, Left, Left, Left

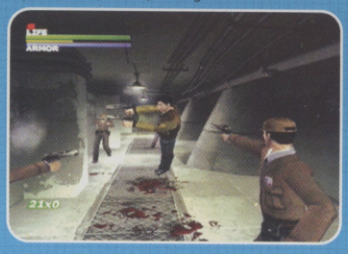
ONE-SHOT KILLS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Triangle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Left

ADRENALIN
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Left, Right, Left, Circle, Square

DUEL GUNCONS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Triangle, Circle, Up, Up, Up

HEALTH
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Square, Triangle, Left, up, Right

DISARMED ENEMIES
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Right, Square, Left, Circle, Triangle

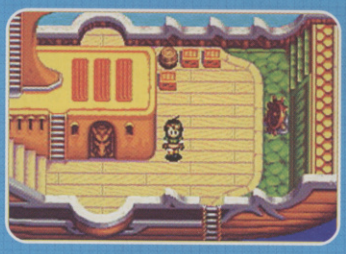


GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE

The following useful tips were sent in by reader Jake from London:

BONUS DUNGEON
Get all the Djinni from Golden Sun and Golden Sun 2, and go to Contigo and use the teleporter in the circle in the middle of town.

HARD MODE
With a clear Data file and an Empty file select New Game. After transferring data, refuse to play Easy and then select Hard.



REALLY STUCK?

Absolutely stumped on a game? Ridiculed by your mates? There is hope:

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Open seven days a week, 8am-11pm. On the very rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team, who guarantees to find you an answer within 24 hours. Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does before calling. In case of problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6155.

BARNY'S PROBLEM CORNER

Is your brow furrowing into a deep crease? Let Barny sort out all your problems. He's not much cop at girl questions, though

MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER

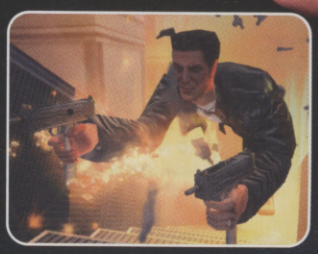
Q. In Gun For Hire I'm meant to blow up this teleporter where the aliens are coming from. I've found the teleporter and aliens keep coming out, but I can't blow it up.
Anon, via email

A. *You're probably trying to blow up one of the sub-teleporters and they can't be destroyed. To find the main teleporter (which feeds the others), go through the door on the right in the lower half of the large room filled with steam (it has a sub-teleporter in it). Just past the swimming pool there's another room. At the back of here there's a small alcove with a steam valve in it. Turn the valve, then head back to the large room with the sub-teleporter in. Go through the door you just opened which is at the back of the room. Shortly afterwards you will find the main teleporter – you can destroy it with a few rockets.*

MAX PAYNE

Q. Help me! I'm stuck in Part Two of Max Payne. I've just started this bit where everything catches fire and I die all the time. There's no way through the flames and no way back either. Do you think this is a bug or am I missing something obvious?
Anon, via email

A. *This bit's just hard – you need to be able to run through the flaming rooms very quickly. Go through the door next to the bar, and then speed over to the door really fast. Bookcases will fall over in the next room, so open the grey door on the right. You have to be very quick otherwise the bookshelves will fall over, blocking the way and causing you to die. If you just run through this section in one fluid motion you should make it easily.*



STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

Q. I'm in Yavin trying to learn the ways of the Force in the temple, but I don't know what to do. I'm right at the end where I can see my lightsaber in a cage, but I can't get it no matter what I do.
Jon, Devon

A. *Use Force Push to push away the poles holding it up so that the cage comes down. Then find the platform at the back of the area. There should be a large floor switch you can stand on. Stand on this. When it reaches the bottom use Force Speed and run towards the lightsaber. When you are halfway there you must switch to Force Pull and yank the lightsaber into your hand before the cage closes again.*

CONFLICT DESERT STORM

Q. I'm stuck on the first level where I have to rescue my mate from the Iraqi soldiers. I'm meant to get there without raising the alarm, but I always get spotted and killed when I try to cross the bridge.
James Tims, Kent

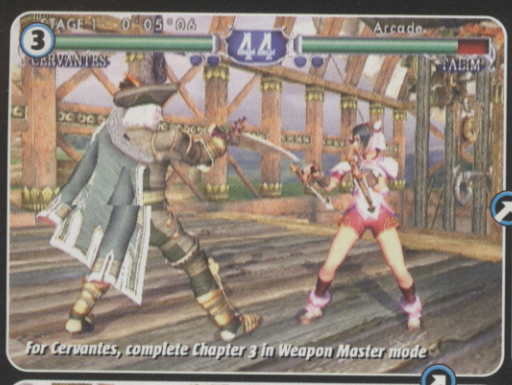
A. *Instead of crossing the bridge you should head right and go underneath it. There is a tank rumbling around down here, but if you cross to the far side and crawl along right next to the cliffside it won't notice you. Sometimes you will be spotted by a man on the clifftop, but so long as you stick to the cliff and never stand (or even crouch) you should be able to get through.*

SOULCALIBUR II PLAYER'S GUIDE

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee, courtesy of CVG. We show you the best moves and fighters to take your opponents down

1 UNLOCKING STUFF

Beating Arcade 20 times won't unlock much. Instead, you have to play through Weapon Master mode. You can interchange characters as much as you like, but to get your hands on the weapons and five unlockable characters, you must complete all of Weapon Master mode – including sub-chapters and extra chapters. Only then will you be able to buy weapons from each location.

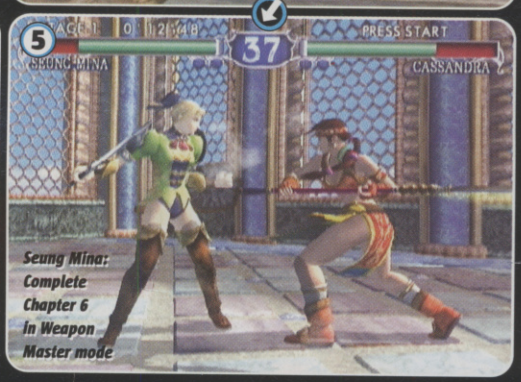


For Cervantes, complete Chapter 3 in Weapon Master mode

Sophitia: Complete Chapter 4 in Weapon Master mode

For Yoshimitsu: Finish Chapter 2 in Weapon Master mode. The thing that's a bit special about Yoshimitsu is that he swears a lot. Sweet boy

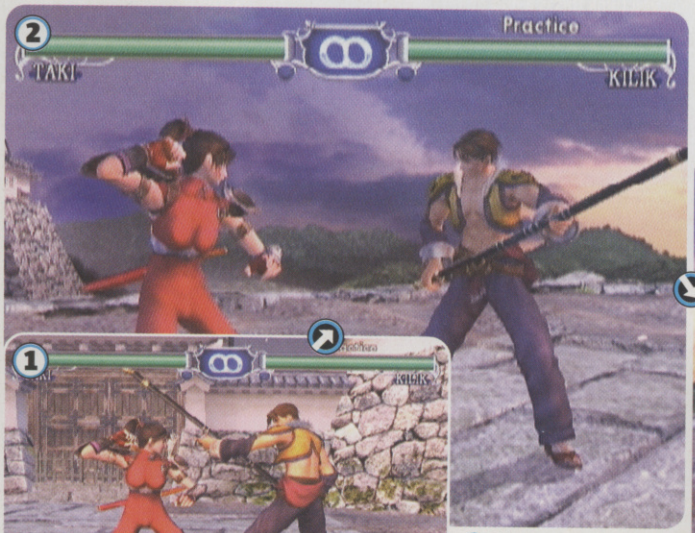
Charade: After beating chapter 2, beat the first mission in Chapter 3



Seung Mina: Complete Chapter 6 in Weapon Master mode

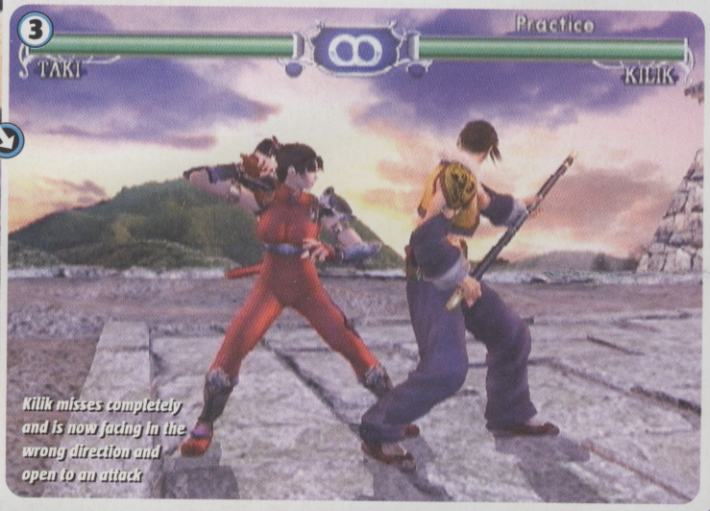
2 MOVING

Moving in all directions is easier in Soulcalibur then just about any other fighting game. If all you've played is Tekken and Street Fighter, then you won't be accustomed to moving around, as you'll be more used to being toe to toe with your rival. Simply push up or down (back or forward) to move around your opponent. If you know they are about to strike, you can use this instead of blocking to avoid most attacks. Once your opponent has made their attack and you've moved out of the way, they'll be facing the wrong direction. Now that they're defenceless, lay into them with your cheapest moves. The sight of their rival circling around them can also upset an opponent who is frustrating you with a good defence. You also have access to a variety of attacks while on the move.



This weapon makes it more difficult to hit Taki

Taki uses her speed to move around the arena



Kilik misses completely and is now facing in the wrong direction and open to an attack

3 HIT THEM WHEN THEY'RE DOWN

If you manage to knock your opponent to the floor, don't forget to rush over and do a follow-up attack while they're on the deck. Get in a good position and you can knock them right back down again as they try to get up, and then launch into another ground attack. If you don't fancy rushing over to put the boot in, then use the time to prepare for your next attack. This is a good point to start any moves that take a second or two to charge. If you're the one on the ground, then you can roll around and get up attacking if your rival is standing over you.

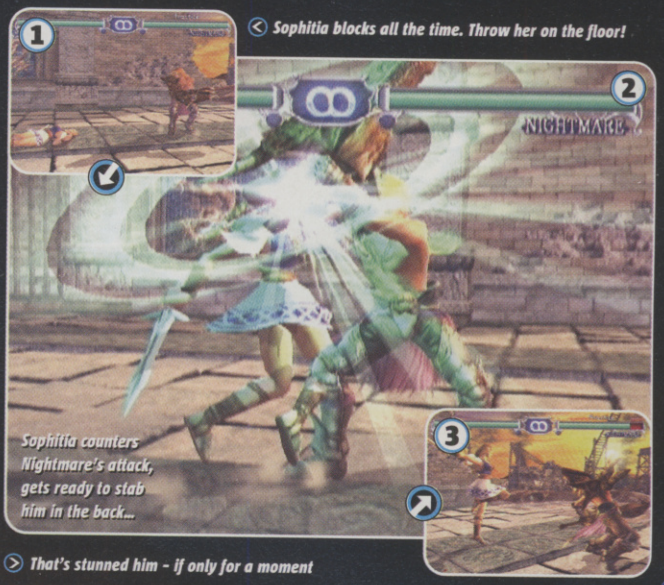
Spawn's Shadow Stalker leaves Maxi on the floor

Hell Splitter causes more damage

As soon as Maxi is back up - down he goes again!

4 BLOCKING

If you want to win a fight, you need to know how to block. You can block nearly every move that's thrown at you (except throws of course). In terms of the moves that are unblockable, you can usually see these coming a mile away. Blocking low or high attacks takes practice, so set the CPU to its highest difficulty and see how long you last. This is a good time to practice countering (G+Dpad Forward or Back). Time this correctly and you can turn an attacker's thrust away leaving them open to a counter-attack.



Sophitia blocks all the time. Throw her on the floor!

Sophitia counters Nightmare's attack, gets ready to stab him in the back...

That's stunned him - if only for a moment

5 KICKING

This might be a weapon-based game but don't forget to use your feet. Some characters like Taki are good at kicking and some – like stump leg Mitsurugi – are not. The main benefit of kicking is speed. Most kicking moves take little preparation – so opponents won't see it coming. Good defenders can often be caught out by low-hitting kick attacks to their shins. It won't do much damage, but you can repeat until they start blocking low – then start laying in with the high attacks. Remember, good kickers like Yungsung and Taki can win rounds with their feet.

Yungsung's Double Hawk kick hits twice

Leg Sweep catches Ivy by surprise

Yungsung follows with a Roundhouse Kick

6 FEINTING AND CANCELLING

This is when you stop an attack at the last minute. It's handy for stopping moves mid-flow if you see your opponent has moved away, or is performing an attacking move that might hit you first. If you look through a fighter's command list, you can cancel different series of attacks by pressing G. If you get good at performing a certain series of moves such as Rising Bo Feint by Kilik, then being able to cancel movements is a good way of unsettling an opponent, putting them off their guard.

Xianghua's Woan Shyong Combo goes for the hit twice...

Voldo blocks it easily, though. He saw that one coming...

So next time Xianghua cancels and starts another move

7 ESSENTIAL COMBOS

MITSURUGI

1 RELIC Back+A+B: This will make Mitsurugi place his sword back in his sheath. Pressing any button now will unleash a very quick attack. Pressing A+B in Relic will enable Bill of Fire to carry out an unblockable move. Hold down the buttons for greater power.

2 DIVIDING THRUST A+K: You need to be up close. If you perform this move while your opponent is at the ringside, an unblocked hit will see Mitsurugi kick the other character out of the arena as he pulls his sword.

SPAWN (XBOX ONLY)

1 NECRO BLAST Back+A+B: This is a great long-range fireball. If you hold the buttons down while doing it he will perform a longer but more powerful version. This can also be done in the air when using Levitation. Holding down A+B in the air will perform an unblockable Necro Blast.

2 LEVITATION B+K: This makes Spawn float in the air. From here you can perform a variety of great attacks, such as pressing K to perform a quick diagonally downwards strike to hit from a distance.

NECRID

1 ELDER TOPAZ Down, Diagonal/Back/Down/Back will start Necrid's powerful attacks. As you perform the Dpad movement, press A if you're close to your opponent, or B if you're at a distance. Pressing K, K, K will perform a neat little combo but leave you on the floor.

2 GRAND VALOUR Down, Up, A, B: Do this near the edge of the arena and you stand a good chance of throwing your rival out. If not, your opponent should be a good distance away and on the floor so follow up with a long-range attack such as Void Cannon (B+K).

TAKI

1 WIND ROLL B+K makes Taki roll forwards from which you have a few good options such as B, B, B for Wind Stealing Rush. You can also go into the Possession stance and perform the unblockable Exorcism (A+B).

2 ASSASSIN'S STRIKE Forward, Forward, B: This is a very easy move to pull off but it's great at taking opponents by surprise as it's very quick. Taki is very fast and can leap behind with Stalker (A+B). If you use the red outfit her juggling breasts will put the DOA girls to shame.

TALIM

1 TORNADO ASSAULT KAMAY Hold Back, A, A, A, Down, Diagonal/Forward/Down, B: This move is quick and difficult to detect as it starts with a step backwards. It dishes out a decent amount of punishment and can knock your opponent back and out of the ring.

2 WIND CHARMER Any direction (except forwards or backwards) B+K: This is a quick sidestep to get behind your rival. As soon as you've finished the move you are free to get in a quick attack or throw.

CASSANDRA

1 ANGEL'S WRATH Down, Diagonal/Down/Back, Back B: This is a good move for surprising people, as Cassandra seems to step away and turn around before unleashing the attack. Opponents instinctively let their guard down when she starts performing this one, only to be soundly smacked a second later.

2 GUARDIAN STRIKE Down, B, B, K: Use this whenever your opponent's back is to the edge of the arena. A successful attack from this position can often send the defender flying backwards and out of the ring or into the wall. It hurts too, which is always a bonus.

YUNSUNG

1 RAGING PANTHER Forwards, K, K, A, A: Nothing fancy about this but it hits high, middle and low, making it pretty damn hard to defend against. The trick is to focus on pressing the buttons in a fluid motion, rather than watching the actions of the character.

2 LAND WALK Down, Diagonally/Down/Back, Back: This neat movement will step you backwards slightly but you can perform Lightning Kicks by adding K, K, K, or Coiling Viper thrust by adding B+K.

RAPHAEL

1 QUICK PARADE Diagonal/Down/Back, A+B: This seems like a taunt but then press B, B to perform the Stocatta Rampage Crescendo. If you hold down A+B while performing Quick Parade, you'll move around your opponent.

2 RETREAT STEP Down, Diagonal/Down/Back/Back: This is one of Raphael's sneakiest manoeuvres, providing a platform for unleashing a few different fast attacks. Press K afterwards to do a nice little Pirouette Kick.

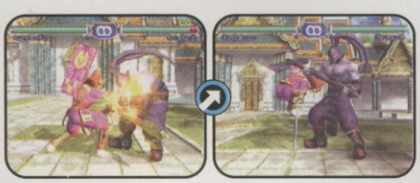
KILIK

1 TRIBUTE Down, Diagonal/Down/Back, Back: Kilik does the splits to lower himself to the ground – there he can make a few different attacks to unsettle his opponents. Follow the Tribute with any other attack.

2 PHOENIX RAGE THRUST Back, B: This is effective at short to medium range and is a great opening move. This is because the distance between players at the start is perfect for it. It has the added bonus of knocking the other player backwards onto the floor, and if they happen to be near the edge – out they go.

8 UNLOCKABLE CHARACTERS

YOSHIMITSU



SWORD SPIRIT MID Forward, B: This is a very simple move but it can be easily varied to outwit a good defender. Yoshimitsu swears as he performs this and no wonder – we've seen it used a lot and it's fooled us almost every time so far. Argh.

SWORD POGO Press A+B and Yoshimitsu pogos on his sword. From here he can do all sorts of wacky moves such as Pogo Rush (Forward, A+B). The sheer number of different moves should ensure that your rival is never quite sure what's coming next.

CERVANTES

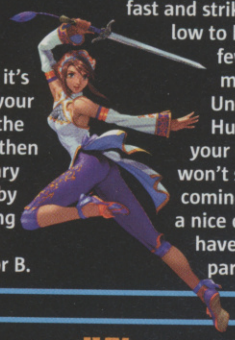
DREAD CHARGE Down, Diagonal/Back/Down, Back: Cervantes charges up as if to unleash his unblockable Dread Slash (Press A after Dread Charge). However, he can quickly switch to a different move such as the Dash Flare where he leaps high and comes down hard.

ETERNAL CURSE Diagonal/Down/Back, A+B: Cervantes had a few unblockable moves that are easy to perform, making him seem a bit cheap. All these moves start with a give-away energy charge, so expect them to work on anyone with slow reactions.

CHARADE

Charade is a pot luck character that randomly takes on the weapons and characteristics of another fighter, so you're never sure what you're going to get. If you're confident playing any character then choose Charade. If not, don't pick her until you're a better player.

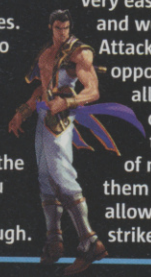
XIANGHUA



1 MEI HUA CARVE A+B, Down, B: This hits low, high, and low so it's very difficult to defend against as it's so fast. If your rival gets the hang of it then you can vary the move by not pressing Down and adding A or B.

2 ANGRY SHUI SHIAN Diagonal/Forward/Down, A, K. This is another move that's fast and strikes from low to high in a few swift moments. Unlike Mei Hua Carve, your rival won't see it coming, so it's a nice one to have in your party bag.

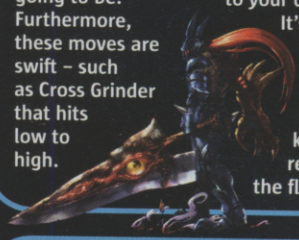
MAXI



1 FURY RIGHT OUTER B+K, B, B, B, A: Maxi is the button basher's fighter of choice as he can perform a lot of multiple-hit moves. This one is easy to pull off and finishes with knocking the other player into the air and onto the floor – where you can follow up if you're quick enough.

2 DANDY SURPRISE BEHIND LOWER Down, Diagonal/Forward/Down, Forward, A: This is very easy to do and works well. Attacking an opponent's feet all the time does have the benefit of making them block low, allowing you to strike high.

NIGHTMARE



1 NIGHT BEHIND STANCE B+K: Nightmare has a lot of these stances, and when he moves into one you never know which one it's going to be. Furthermore, these moves are swift – such as Cross Grinder that hits low to high.

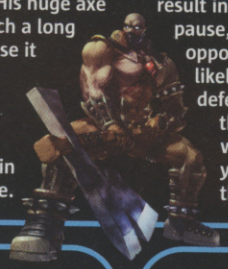
2 MAIL SPLITTER B: This is the move that people playing Nightmare use most often. It's quite cheap, as you don't need to be too close to your opponent. It's fairly quick and does lots of damage while knocking the recipient to the floor.

IVY

1 PLEASURE CHARGE B+K: Ivy's sword changes into a metal whip giving her longer range. Then press any combination of buttons e.g. A+B (Venom Strike) for a powerful attack.

2 SPIRAL SERENADE A+B: Ivy changes her sword into a whip. Press B, B, B, to perform Mistress Justice. Ivy can link together stances and weapon states to perform chains of attacks. After performing a Spiral Serenade attack, she'll still be spinning her whip, ready for the next command.

ASTAROTH



1 POSEIDON TIDE Down, Diagonal/Down/Back, Back, A: Astaroth seems to have less moves, but makes up for it in sheer power and range. His huge axe can reach a long way – use it to keep quicker fighters from getting in too close.

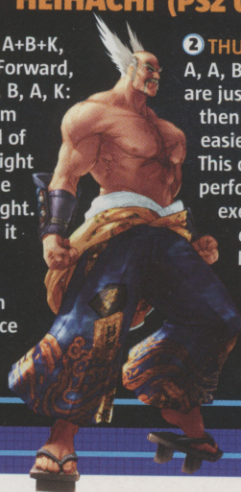
2 BULL RUSH Forward, Forward, K: This is more of a headbutt, where Astaroth charges forward. Holding down the buttons will result in a slight pause, if your opponent looks likely to defend. Catch them and it will knock your rival to the floor.

VOLDO

1 RAT KICK Down, K: Voldo is one of the oddest characters in the game. He has a lot of moves like this, that are hysterical to watch – especially when repeated. Due to the unusual way he contorts his body, it's quite hard to be sure what he's going to do next – and you might be laughing too much to even care.

2 MANTIS CRAWL Diagonal/Down/Forward, A+K: This stance puts Voldo in an odd position, from which he can perform moves such as Mantis Fire Dance (Forward, Forward) where he walks over a rival. Add Down, Up, B, B, B and he'll belly flop attack from the floor.

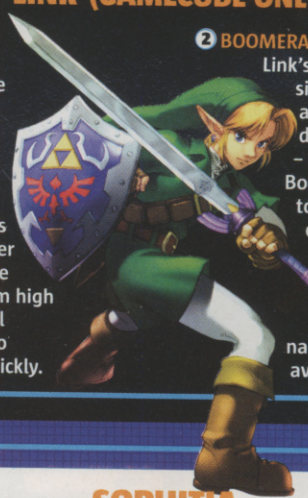
HEIHACHI (PS2 ONLY)



1 10-HIT COMBO A+B+K, Diagonal/Down/Forward, K, B, A, K, K, B, K, B, A, K: If you practice from now until the end of the month you might be able to pull one of these off in a fight. If you do manage it they do a lot of damage, hitting both low and high repeatedly. Defence is almost impossible.

2 THUNDER TWIN HAMMER A, A, B: If 10-hit mega-combos are just completely beyond you, then Heihachi has loads of easier-to-pull-off fast combos. This one is very easy to perform and very quick to execute. What could be easier than A, A, B? It's good for hitting anyone attempting a more long-winded move. And you don't need to stay up all night learning how to do it.

LINK (GAMECUBE ONLY)



1 ARROW A+B: Link's ranged attacks are quite effective as adding an extra button press determines where they hit your rival. In this way, they'll never be sure if you are going to hit them high or low, so they'll probably want to close the gap quickly.

2 BOOMERANG B+K: This is Link's best stance as sidestepping to avoid an attack is pretty difficult. It's nifty too – Link can throw his Boomerang sideways to catch quick-footed opponents off-guard. The attack also hits on the way back (hence the name) so they have to avoid or block that.

SEUNG MINA

LIGHT CRANE A+B: This is a nifty move where Seung Mina rotates her weapon, inflicting light damage but also forming a barrier to keep other fighters back. She can add to it by pressing A, B to make Dancing Crane or A+B to make Heavy Crane – which repeats the move, increasing the damage.

RAPID EARTH Down, A+B: Seung Mina has a variety of good low attacks where you can press a direction with A+B and get different results. Rapid Earth hits the feet multiple times causing light damage, but it's also very quick and good for catching people off-guard who are defending.

SOPHITIA

ANGEL STEP Down, Diagonal/Down/Forward, Forward. This is a short dash that can be doubled to Twin Angel Step by doing the action twice. This is the precursor to lots of small moves such as Angel's Strike (add A, A). She's similar to Cassandra, so being good with one will help with the other.

ANGEL'S SAULT Up, K, Diagonal/Up/Forwards, K. Sophitia does a series of two double kicks, the second of which knocks the other person over. If they are near the edge of the arena they will fall out. This move can be varied easily if your rival looks like they're starting to get the hang of it.

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC PLAYER'S GUIDE

Mastering the Force can be tough, but defeating the Sith is impossible! So let Barny Zoeller give you some advice to get you started and guide you through the hard bits

1 MAKING YOUR CHARACTER

If you make mistakes when designing your character, the only way you will be able to rectify them is to restart. Level 20 is the maximum you can obtain. You don't receive many attribute point upgrades as you progress, so if you're unsure then let the computer assign them. However, keep Constitution and Intelligence low and assign extra points to Strength and Dexterity if you want to be a melee fighter, or to Wisdom if you want to be a powerful Force user. The most important skill you need is Treat Injury – your party members will make up for anything you lack skill-wise. When you choose Feats, don't choose anything that makes you a better blaster. This is because after about five hours' gameplay you become a Jedi and you'll be wanting to use lightsabers and Force powers – so any long-range weapon Feats you have might become redundant. If you want long-range shooters, then rely on party members for them.

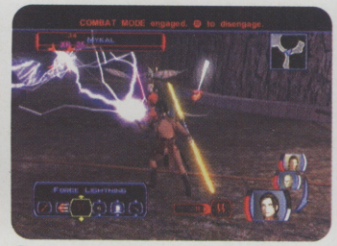
The only difference between a female character and a male character is the love interest they've got going in the plot

If you're unsure about character creation be a soldier then a Jedi Guardian later, and have high Strength and Dexterity

2 DARK AND LIGHT

Throughout the game you get the chance to make decisions that affect your Force alignment. If you choose to be nasty to people by threatening, killing and being abusive, you will receive dark points. If you choose to be nice, helpful and charitable you will receive light points. The most immediate difference between the two is that dark side characters tend to be richer. Aside from this, your Force alignment affects the Force powers you choose. If you are a light side character you will be better at using light Force powers such as Heal. If you are dark side then you will be better at using dark powers such as Death or Drain Life. Although a light side character can still choose to choke people to death, they aren't as good at this as dark characters. Always pick neutral Force powers or those corresponding with your alignment. If you want to have Force powers from the alignment opposite to yours, then give them to Jolee when you meet him on Kashyyyk.

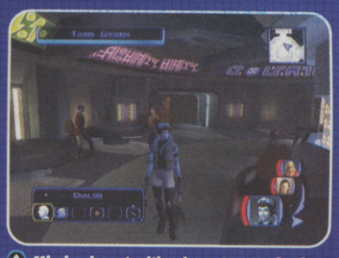
Light side Force powers might seem weaker than dark, but they often allow your team to survive longer



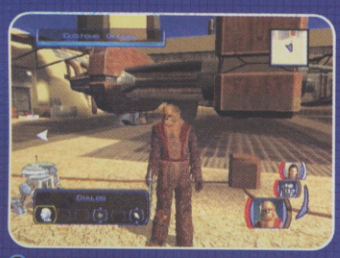
Dark side powers are all about inflicting pain and suffering. Drain Life does what it says on the tin, and is particularly nasty

3 CHARACTERS

You can only take two with you at a time. Although a good blaster character can be effective, they require a lot more attention than Force users. Most of the time the best characters to have in your group will be Bastila and Jolee, with Juhani being a replacement for them whenever they're not around. There is little in the game that can withstand being sliced by three Jedis. You'll want a wide range of Force powers in your trio, so if you are a light side player have Jolee use dark Force powers. If you are dark then have Jolee use light – it's as simple as that. The other thing is to make sure someone has Cure rather than Heal, as this is essential. And make sure your main healer keeps a reserve of Force energy at all times – just in case.



Mission is a stealthy character, so give her the best pistols you can find and upgrade pistol-related Feats to the max



Zaalbar should be treated like a walking tank. Choose either melee or long-range weapons and concentrate on that path

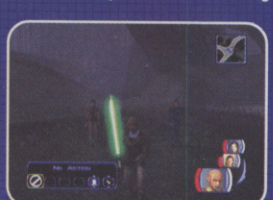
Canderous should be equipped with heavy long-range weapons and given the best armour. Upgrade Feats such as Sniper Shot

T3-M4 should be reserved mainly for when you need to hack something, so upgrade Intelligence and Computer skills

HK-47 can easily kill meatbags from a distance. Give him all the heaviest droid parts you can find and use Rapid Shot

Bastila should be in your party most of the time. Give her a double-bladed lightsaber, upgrade Dexterity and give her the best light powers

Juhani should have a single saber and Duelling maxed out. Give her enhancing Force powers such as shields and speed

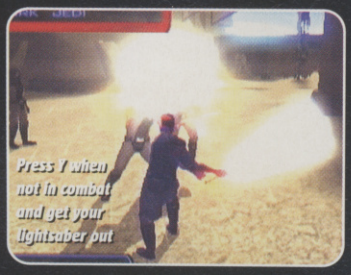


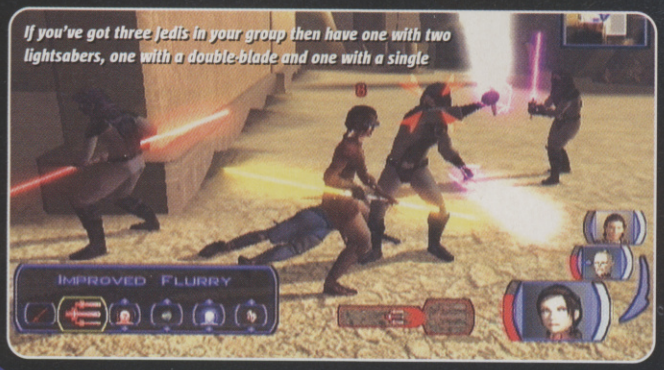
Jolee is neutral so give him dark Force powers (even if your Force alignment is light) and upgrade Wisdom and Charisma

Carth is a decent blaster user. Upgrade Two-Weapon Fighting and Rapid Shot, then give him the best blasters you can find

4 LIGHTSABERS

Sadly, you won't get a lightsaber until you reach the second planet. The colour of your lightsaber makes no difference to its power. You can have either a double-bladed (Darth Maul-style) lightsaber, two single lightsabers or just the one. If you choose double then make sure you improve Two-Hand Weapon Feat to master level, and if you're a single user then improve Duelling. Lightsabers can be upgraded at a workbench to improve them. You will want to put crystals on them that have High Attack (this determines whether you succeed in hitting your target), and High Damage (the amount of damage done should you hit). If you want a purple lightsaber you can find a violet crystal in some rubble on the right-hand side of the Krayt Dragon's cave (after it's dead, obviously) on Tatooine. The Krayt Dragon Pearl is also a good upgrade for your lightsaber. Later in the game you'll want to be putting in Upari, Sigil and Solari crystals to deal out heavy damage.

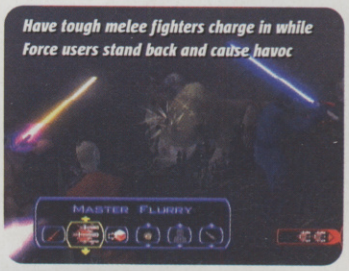




If you've got three Jedis in your group then have one with two lightsabers, one with a double-blade and one with a single

5 COMBAT

Most of the time you won't need to worry about strategies. As long as you never allow yourself to be surrounded by large groups, just let everyone melee attack. For tougher fights, you will have to take direct control of everyone in your party. Before entering a tough fight you should activate your shields and any defensive/enhancing Force powers you have. If you find a fight really hard then activate one of every stimulant as well. If you're fighting a boss who is surrounded by lots of lesser enemies, then use multiple Area Effect Force powers such as Force Storm to weaken the boss while killing off his minions. If the minions are tough, then set your two party members on them one at a time while you keep the boss occupied. Force powers such as Stasis, Stun or Plague are very useful for delaying the enemy. Have one character cast one of these while the other two hack away. You'll win every battle as long as you're careful, and you can help yourself by setting the game to pause after each round of combat.



Have tough melee fighters charge in while Force users stand back and cause havoc

If your three main characters have a good mix of Feats and powers you can deal with almost anything

6 TARIS: GETTING A SITH UNIFORM

There are two ways to get a uniform. Talk nicely to the off-duty Sith in the Cantina and agree to go to their party. Head to the North Apartments and walk round until you find the party. Go in and all the Sith will get drunk and pass out, allowing you to grab one of their uniforms. The other way to get a uniform is to go to the North Apartments and talk to the Sith harassing the smuggler. Try and enter the room and they should get angry and attack you. Kill them to get the disguise.

You'll find the Sith in the Cantina. If your character is male, look for a woman. If you're female, look for a fella

7 DANTOOINE: KILLING THE MANDALORIAN LEADER

This is one of the hardest fights in the game, so make sure you switch on your shields, take one of every stim and activate Force powers. As soon as the fight starts, get your whole party to concentrate on the leader. At least one character should have Cure or Heal, so make sure they keep some Force power in reserve. Don't bother trying to stun the boss – just concentrate on hacking away. If you have any Area Effect powers, use these to damage the lesser bad guys. This fight might take a few tries but so long as you take time, pause the game and use Cure/Heal you should win.

You'll encounter a lot of Mandalorians in this game, but this lot are the hardest

8 TATOOINE: GETTING INTO THE SAND PEOPLE ENCLAVE

You will need a Sand People Uniform for each party member (not droids) that you want to enter the compound. You can get these off the dead bodies of just about everyone you kill. When you're in the enclave, you can fight your way round to the Chief and kill him to get dark Force points, or if you have HK-47, kill the guards in the first area then walk round to the Chief without doing anything suspicious and talk to him.

When you dress up in Sand People clothes you don't need to use Gaffi Sticks – so keep your lightsabers

9 KASHYYYK CHIEFTAIN'S QUEST

When you reach the Lower Shadowlands, take the first left you see and look for a Wookiee on the left. After you defeat it – talk to it. Should you decide to be evil you can kill it and return to the Chief to finish his quest. If you want light points, talk to the Wookiee and agree to get the sword. Head north and look for some Viper Kinraths along the way. Get their remains and tie them to the vine in the area at the end. Kill the beast when it arrives and take the blade back to the Wookiee. Return to the chief and then it's up to you to decide who should be chief between Chuundar and his father.

In this quest, what you decide in the conversation will make a huge difference to what you need to do

Speed redefined.

"Whenever you flip upside down you can actually feel it in your stomach!."

Cube 93%

"F-Zero GX is everything we expected and more. One of GameCube's best titles."

NOM

"Rapidly approaching racing perfection."

Games TM 9/10

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REVIEWS

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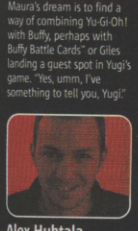
CVG EXPERT REVIEWERS

Meet the crew with the swiftest fingers who use all their energy to bring you the latest reviews!

Graeme Boyd
BOY ACTION HERO
Last seen shoehorning himself into a shiny red PVC catsuit and riding the kiddie plane rides down the pier in honour of bubble-butted Viewtiful Joe. No really. It's quite a resemblance.

Maura Sutton
CARD ACE/BUFFY FAN
Maura's dream is to find a way of combining Yu-Gi-Oh! with Buffy, perhaps with Buffy Battle Cards" or Giles landing a guest spot in Yugi's game. "Yes, umm, I've something to tell you, Yugi."



Alex Huhtala
FONT OF WWE KNOWLEDGE
Alex knows so much about wrestling videogames that the games developers ask his advice. Fact. So you can trust his words. That, plus the fact he wields a folding chair like a Ninja.

Mike Cooper
PRO EVO DADDIO
Took time out from the News section and organising Pro Evo championships to play Mario's latest squeeze of the cash udder. He jumped up and down a lot, then came over all nostalgic.

Dave McComb
POWER RANGERS FAN
As a freelance writer with impossibly varied skills, Dave is no stranger to morphing between different forms and mixing his abilities. Alter Echo-stylee. He's even transformed into a sheep to escape 'tea duties'.

CLASH OF THE TITANS

Some of the biggest names in the entire world of entertainment, not just videogames, are going head-to-head this month in a battle royale. International wrestling superstars will be grappling with the card-chucking heroes in Yu-Gi-Oh! and hoping they don't get paper cuts.

Buffy and her Slayerettes will be splashing the holy water on Mario and his pals. The winners should take pride of place in your games collection, the losers condemned to a life used as coasters and Frisbees. But what's really exciting about this month's clash of titanic game licences is that there are big surprises in store – all bets are off. A Simpsons game that's actually great fun and a WWE game that's a real let-down? You've never needed our expert reviews so bad!

LEE
Lee Skittrell
Games Editor

THIS MONTH

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101	Megaman Zero 2	GBA
101	Splashdown 2: Rides Gone Wild	PS2

WHAT THE SCORES MEAN

CVG only reviews the biggest, best or most significant releases of the month. And our scores are based on one key measure: fun! It's that simple. Here's a breakdown:

1	WHY, GOD, WHY?
2	STINKS. NEVER PLAY THIS
3	A WASTE OF YOUR MONEY
4	MAYBE RENT, NEVER BUY
5	VERY AVERAGE
6	FAIRLY SOLID BUT NOWT SPECIAL
7	TASTY
8	QUALITY GAME, CONSIDER BUYING IT
9	CLASS ON A DISC
10	AN ABSOLUTE MUST THAT DEFINES THE GENRE

CVG AWARDS SYSTEM

These accolades don't get dished out just because a game gets a certain score. They're CVG's way of telling you which are our pet hates and personal favourites.

CVG ESSENTIAL
The most coveted award a game can get. It's worth buying the console to play the game

CVG RECOMMENDED
A damn good game. It may not break the mould, but it's a cut above the rest

CVG GAME OF THE MONTH
Doesn't have to be the highest scorer, but it's CVG's pick of the bunch this month

CVG STINKER
More abominable than a Yeti

JAK II

CVG GAME OF THE MONTH

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £39.99 | PLAYERS: 1 | OUT: OCTOBER 17 | PUB: SONY | DEV: NAUGHTY DOG | WWW.JAKIIRENEGADE.COM

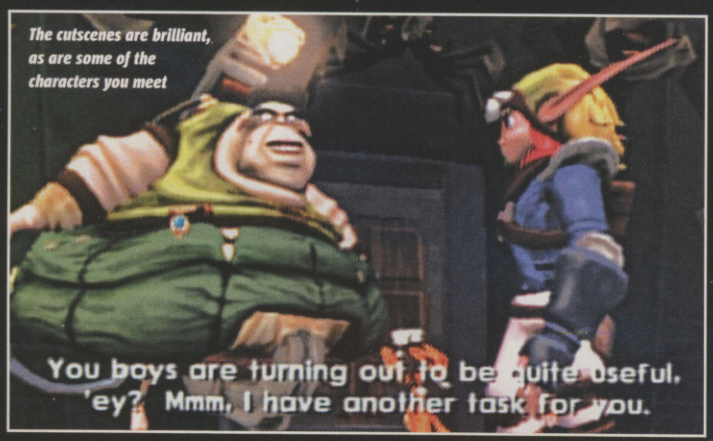
JAK AND DAXTER DITCH PLATFORMING AND GO FOR FREE-ROAMING THRILLS

Jak and Daxter are back in a brand new adventure that's unlike any you'll have seen before.

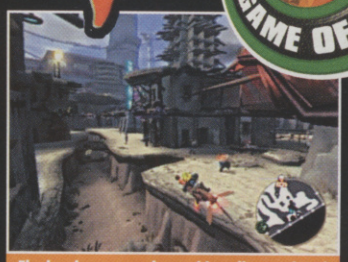
This time you're not exploring peaceful lush green islands but are trapped in a sprawling metropolis 500 years in the future.

What's more, Jak is a wanted man, on the run from an evil baron, the ruler of this nightmarish future.

As a sequel, this is as far removed from the original as possible. Sure, it's got lots of similarities and ideas carried over from the first game, but it takes us to places we would never have dreamed of.



The cutscenes are brilliant, as are some of the characters you meet



The levels are massive and heavily populated and you can explore them at your leisure

Getting some shooting practice in one of the many mini-games is vital to hone your skills

The biggest similarity between the two Jaks is the scale. If you thought the size of the first game was impressive, then get ready for even more. The massive metropolis that you'll explore in Jak II is three times the size of the original. When you add 15 different and just as large areas outside the city, it all adds up to a massive world.

PLAYSTATION'S GREATEST HITS

The original Jak may have been packed with pure platforming thrills – items to collect and plenty of precarious jumps – but the sequel adds more. There are still platforming sections but they are cleverly disguised so that you almost don't notice them.

Added to the mix are elements from some of the PS2's other biggest hits. Jak II borrows key elements from GTA and Tony Hawk's. From GTA you have a giant living and breathing city where you can steal any vehicle and speed across the landscape while being hotly pursued by officers of the the local law enforcement. This isn't 1980s Miami you're playing in, but a futuristic city with hover-cars and laser guns. The designers have added hover-boards and the best elements of Tony Hawk's into the equation with acres of scenery constructed so that you can trick your way around the city.

FUTURISTIC PLAYGROUND

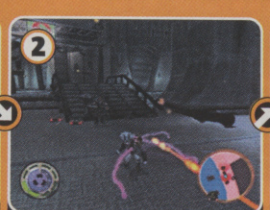
Taking another trick from GTA, the game has a mission-based structure with Jak running errands for the residents of Haven City. Like GTA, the diversity of the missions and the new

DON'T GIVE IN TO THE DARK SIDE, JAK!

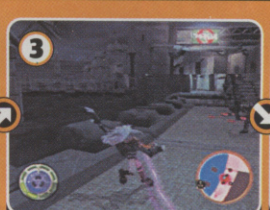
One story element in Jak II is that Jak has been imprisoned for two years by the evil Baron of Haven City. During his incarceration Jak has been experimented on, injected with large doses of Dark Eco.

This plays a part throughout the game as Jak now has a pumped-up, Hulked-out alter-ego known as Dark Jak that's stronger than regular Jak. He also has a new set of moves and can learn more from The Oracle.

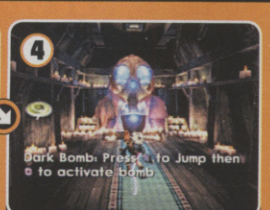
A regular-looking Jak is about to get nasty as his body transforms



Jak's weak body feasts on the Dark Eco and he powers up



Now Dark Jak has extra power to hurt the guards and escape



Dark Jak learns more of his new abilities from The Oracle

A range of new energy effects are awesome

There are several platform sections in Jak II, but they're all pretty cleverly concealed

Jak ventures into the city sewers to run an errand. Watch out for the rats!

IN A BOTHER? GO STEAL A HOVER!

Just like GTA, if you want to get around in Jak II then you'll want to steal a vehicle. The streets are full of pedestrians and patrolling armed guards.

The skies however, are littered with flying vehicles that can all be taken for a spin. All Jak has to do is jump and grab the driver and then pilot the stolen craft to safety.

Some ships like the guard patrol cars even have a range of built-in weapons

Don't hang about - grab the driver to steal their vehicle, then make off sharpish!

One new hover-owner coming right up!

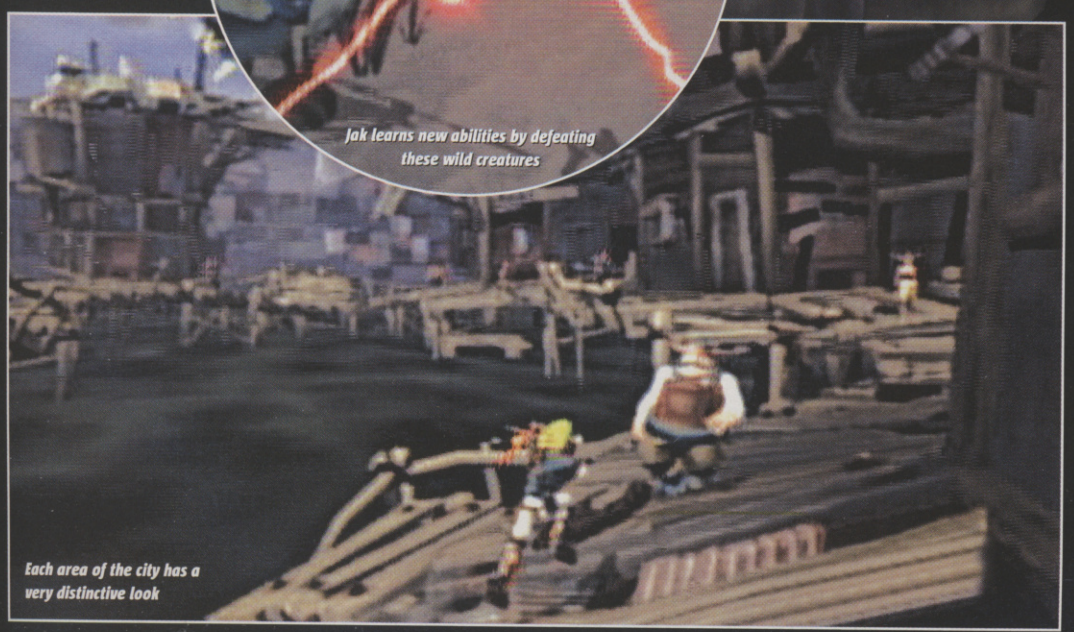
Daxter gets used like a sword when Jak's ammo runs out. Erk!

areas which are opened up on these errands will make you want to play to the end.

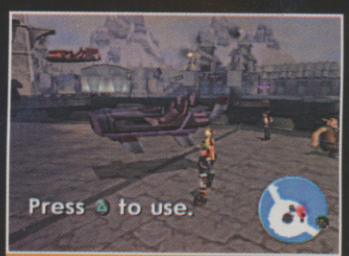
Add to this Daxter's gallows humour that, unlike most game 'humour', actually makes you laugh, side missions, mini-games, a strong story and so much to see and do we just don't have the space. We haven't even got room to mention Dark Jak!

So it's bigger, more diverse and considerably different enough to purchase even if you have the original. But how does it play? The answer is surprisingly well. Despite straying from the formula of the original, the added elements feel completely at home in the world of Jak & Daxter (even if they're not in *their* world).

Jak learns new abilities by defeating these wild creatures



Each area of the city has a very distinctive look



It's handy when empty vehicles are parked on the street. They're just asking to be nicked

computer and video games VERDICT

Jak II manages to achieve the impossible, by being both a different game to the original but still appealing to fans. It's large, ambitious and full of surprises - it's a winner! **Alex H**

- ■ A massive futuristic playground
- ■ Uses many different elements successfully
- ■ Daxter gets his own levels

- ■ Not enough boss battles
- ■ Hooker-free Haven City
- ■ Not as much freedom as GTA

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Jak And Daxter (PS2) ■ Ratchet & Clank (PS2)

Mario proves that he's the king of the all-in-one comedy animal romper suit

SUPER MARIO BROS 3

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4

GAME INFO

ONLINE GAMING

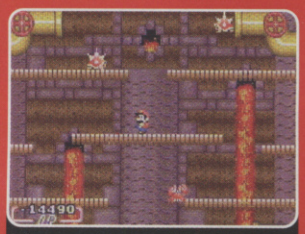
● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-2 ● OUT: OCTOBER 17

● PUB: NINTENDO ● DEV: NINTENDO ● WWW.GAMEBOY.COM/COLLECTION

ENOUGH ALREADY

Every time a new Super Mario Advance title appears it comes with the same Mario Bros mini-game thrown in.

That's just plain crap, and we've had enough. It's such a cop out. Boo!



Come on Nintendo, pull your finger out and give us something new!

Piranha Plants, Koopas and question mark blocks. It's classic Mario action all the way

Mario doesn't look that impressed by their totem pole impression. It's quite good though

You can't even go back and play the old levels once you've completed them

Looks-wise it isn't quite in the same league as Super Mario World

NINTENDO SURPRISES US WITH ALL NEW MARIO GAME. YEAH RIGHT!

REVIEWER

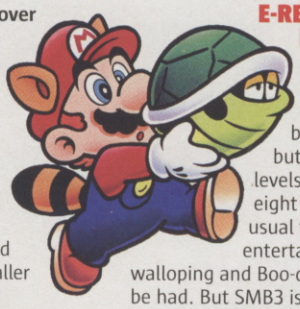
MIKE COOPER

Talk about a nice little earner. Nintendo landed on an Everest-sized pile of wonga after Super Mario Bros 3 was first released on NES back in 1990. It made over $500 million worldwide! That's almost as much as our Alex spends on whiffy hair wax every month.

Eager to squeeze even more pennies out of its Mario-shaped money machine, SMB3 was revived three years later in All-Stars for SNES. However, it bagged the big N a significantly smaller bag-o-cash.

Ten years on and here it is again, this time on GBA. The term 'flogging a dead raccoon-suited plumber' comes to mind. Only this time we're even less keen to hand over our hard-earned notes.

Fair enough, it *was* a brilliant game 13 years ago, but since then the vastly superior Super Mario World has set the new benchmark for 2D platform game paradise. So considering that this is already available for GBA, there's little reason to fork out for an inferior turtle-squishing excursion.



E-READER! WHAT E-READER?

It's the same old set-up. You work your fat bolognaise-eating butt through heaps of levels dotted across eight themed worlds. As usual there's heaps of entertaining Goomba-walloping and Boo-dodging action to be had. But SMB3 is slightly different in that you get to dress up in silly animal costumes when you power up.

That's all well and good, but some new levels and extra features wouldn't go amiss. And whaddya know, they exist... only we'll never see them!

The Japanese and US versions have got e-Reader support, enabling you to upload never-before-seen stages and extra features permanently to your cart. However, Nintendo Europe has just suddenly revealed that it has no plans on releasing the e-Reader in the UK, which had been scheduled for launch over here in October.

At the time of going to press, Nintendo could not confirm whether the extra e-Reader content would be crammed into the final UK boxed copy. If it is, add on an extra point to the score. However, CVG is almost certain that there won't be time for any alterations considering it goes on sale in a month.

Whoa! Whoa! Wh-wh-whoa! Whoa, here comes the hammer!

If you're a hardcore Mario fanatic and just can't get enough of that classic precision-jumping tomfoolery, this will keep your addiction under control. But there just isn't any new content in this 'new' release, meaning that gamers looking for a fresh platforming experience won't be satisfied. CVG

computer and video games VERDICT

SMB3 is fun, but if you've played Super Mario World it feels like a big step backwards. And we've been stuffed big-time on the extra content for the UK game. **Mike**

+
- Classic Mario platform action
- Funky power-up outfits
- Kicking soundtrack

−
- No extra e-Reader levels
- Mediocre graphics
- Little replay value

6 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2 (GBA)

LOG ON AND LOAD UP ON INFO!

Still hungry for more even after thumbing through this game-packed issue of CVG? Logging onto **ComputerAndVideogames.com** will satisfy the biggest gaming appetites

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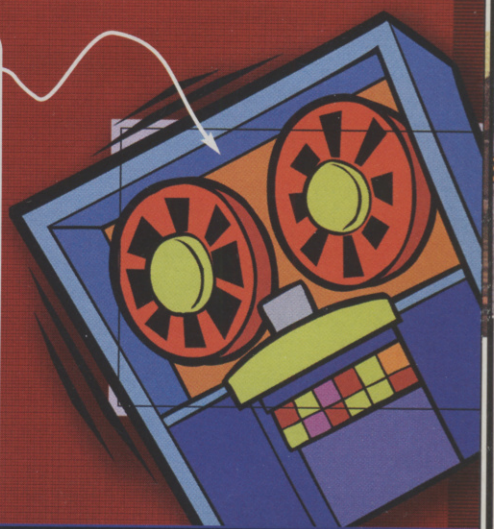

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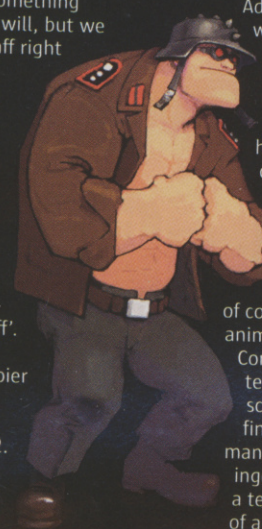
ADVANCE WARS 2
BLACK HOLE RISING

THERE SHOULD BE LAWS AGAINST GAMES THIS ADDICTIVE

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING ● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: OCTOBER 3 ● PUB: NINTENDO ● DEV: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS ● WWW.ADVANCEWARS.COM

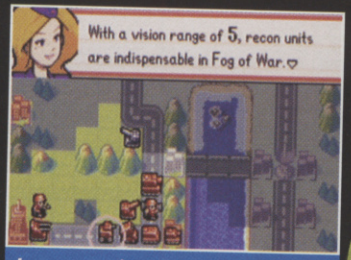
We're very sorry, but you might have to get through the next couple of months without your regular dose of CVG gaming goodness.

We'll try and get something together, honestly we will, but we just don't have any staff right now. An insidious yet delicious affliction known to scientists as Advance Wars Plague-o-rama has spread through the office, causing mass defections from desks and dark mutterings about 'unit supplies' and 'pincer movements on the bluff'. Nothing and no one is safe. Even the photocopier starts twitching when lightly stroked with a copy of Advance Wars 2. There's no hope for us here, but you still have time to shut your eyes, sing 'la-la-la!' loudly and turn the page without being seduced by intoxicating words of love about this evil Jezebel of a game.



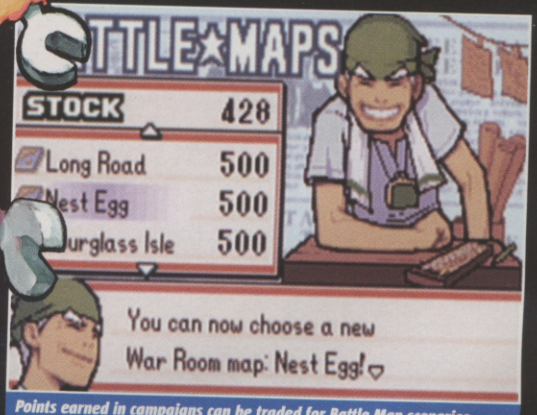
HOLE LOTTA LOVE

Still here? Thought so. Okay. Those who fondly remember the first Advance Wars game should wave their claw-like fingers and over-sized thumbs around like crazy, because Black Hole Rising is everything you could have hoped for. The pocket-sized combat sim basics remain pristine and untouched, but all sorts of cherries and gooey bits of icing have been dolloped on top. It's still turn-based, of course, still plays like a cute anime version of Command & Conquer and you'll still be tempted to take a screwdriver to your GBA to find out how they've managed to cram such an ingenious combat engine into a teeny-weeny cart. But most of all, you're going to be impressed all over again by the fearsome quality of the AI.



In some campaigns, the Fog of War prevents you from seeing where the enemy is hiding

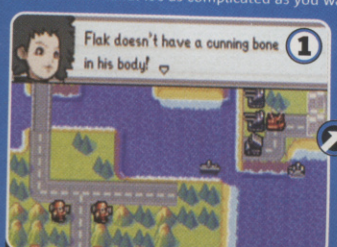
War Room missions are single-battle scenarios where you can earn points and rankings. So get your finger out



Points earned in campaigns can be traded for Battle Map scenarios

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

The campaigns in Advance Wars 2 seem to cover every form of warfare strategy known to man. You might start off with a basic mission capturing enemy territory, but soon you'll be getting to grips with building your own units and engaging the enemy at sea and in the air as well as on the land. It's as complicated as you want to make it...

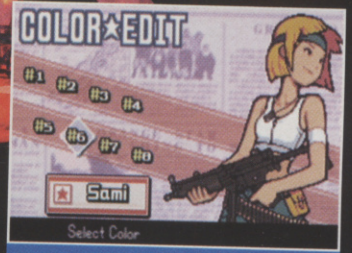


Each mission usually begins with some catty comments from the Black Hole team just to get you riled up. You talkin' to me?

Orange Star CO Nell will then offer some useful advice to help you plan your campaign. She's a friend of Tony Blair's

Some missions are time-sensitive so you'll have to move quickly to avoid a crushing and humiliating defeat

Now you can start moving your units into position and attacking. The better your plans, the greater your chances of victory



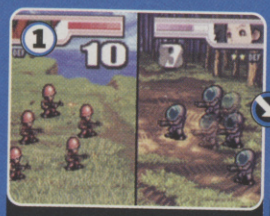
Need a rest from all the fighting? Try changing the colours of your favourite CO. It's wacky!

When you capture a building you get to jump up and down like a big baby. You big baby

HEAVY METAL

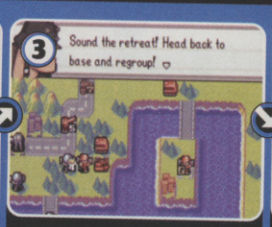
Aside from the compelling gameplay, it's the ingenious and highly detailed weapon design that makes Advance Wars so appealing.

The more money you earn, the more you can plough back into buying cannon fodder foot soldiers. Or, better than that, huge shiny throbbing hunks of metal to wipe the smiles off the Black Hole COs smug faces. They're asking for it you know.



The grunts of Advance Wars. Life comes cheap at $1000 a pop.

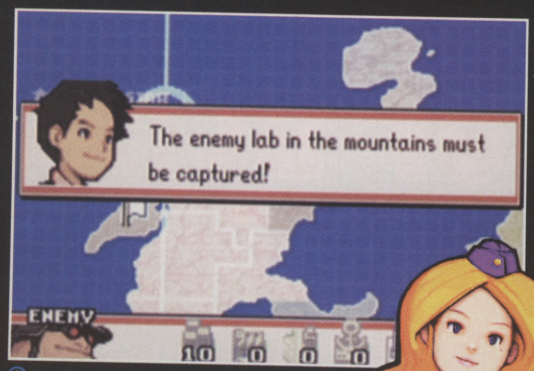
The battleship has the longest fire range of all the units. We like.



APCs are essential for transporting troops and delivering supplies

The humble tank is tough, cheap and fast across the ground

Unleashing a Super CO Power can have spectacular results



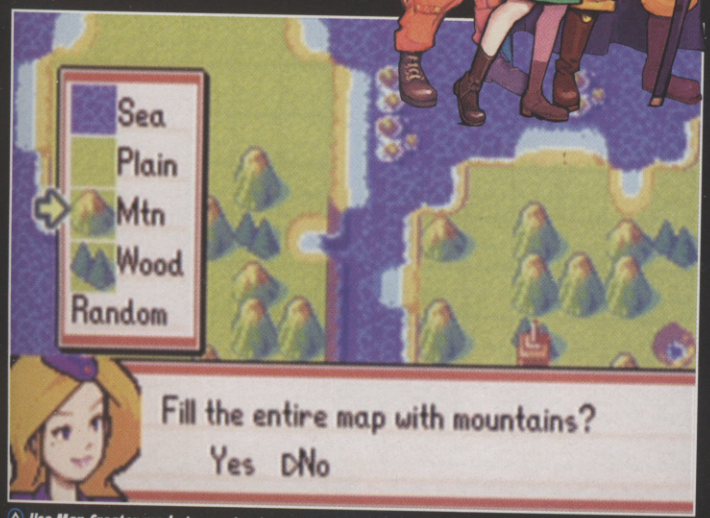
You'll usually have several missions to choose from at any one time on the campaign map

Multiplayer Link modes include Map Trading as well as two-versus-two battles

Whatever she did with that spanner we sure wish we HAD seen it...

Each CO has unique strengths and weaknesses. Olaf has a nice beard to catch crumbs in

This is what happens if you fill the map with mountains. Lots of cones, close together



Use Map Creator mode to construct your own battle scenarios. Fill it with mountains! Go on!

As the missions progress, your brain will be doing cartwheels inside your head trying to calculate how to out-fox the enemy. In later missions, not only will you need to be continuously thinking several moves ahead to avoid getting skewered by enemy units, you'll also need to be a micro-manager, harnessing your resources and building units before you get overwhelmed.

POCKET ROCKET

Heinous Black Hole overlord Sturm may have returned to reprise his pantomime villain role, but he's enlisted a whole new gang of hilariously evil henchmen and women who keep the action fizzing with their taunts and banter. Orange Star COs Andy, Sami and Olaf return to the fray, and you now get to play as several charismatic new COs in the expanded alliance ranks. Whereas the core gameplay remains essentially the same, CO Powers have been enhanced with the addition of an extra tier of Super Powers and a new star system to indicate CO Power levels.

Black Hole Rising has to be the definitive version for newcomers to Advance Wars madness. Fans might have hoped for a few more units other than the Neo Tank, but that's surely a minor quibble compared to the months of joy that await.

CVG VERDICT

Turn-based combat sims might not be everyone's cup of napalm, but Advance Wars 2 expands on a formula already so addictive it should be locked away forever. Run for the hills. **Maura**

- Astonishing AI crammed into a tiny cart
- Crisp, lush anime-style graphics
- Witty repartee between the COs

- May ruin relationships with family and friends
- A couple of new modes would have been nice
- Just one new unit seems a bit stingy

9 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Final Fantasy Tactics (GBA) Worms Blast (GBA)

OTOGI: MYTH OF DEMONS

Fighting the bird man would be a whole lot easier without the distracting scenery

Otogi's atmosphere oozes more than a handkerchief in hay fever season

GAME INFO

ONLINE GAMING

COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1 OUT: NOW

PUB: SEGA DEV: FROM SOFTWARE URL: WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM/OTOGI

SAMURAI, SWORDS AND SORCERY MEET IN THIS SUMPTUOUS XBOX SLASH 'EM UP

Sometimes it seems videogame developers have only one trick left guaranteed to get our jaws splintering into a million chinny pieces as they hit the ground. And that's the improbably expanding and physics-defying bosoms of digital leading ladies everywhere.

But then along comes something like Otogi to dazzle our jaded eyes and work its tiny, pixelly magic the old-fashioned way.

Otogi sees Raikoh, long-dead samurai warrior and all-round moody sword-swinger summoned forth from the afterlife to cleanse the landscape of its demonic pestilence. In a blaze of pyrotechnic gymnastics, Raikoh must slash, hack and magically banish the marauding hellspawn back to the netherworld.

MYTHING IN ACTION

Drawing from classical Japanese folklore, each level is beautifully realised and refreshingly varied

You can research the strengths and weaknesses of enemies before battle

Mirrors spew forth disembodied demon heads. Destroy! Destroy!

Who cares if you're about to die? It all looks so pretty!

Even the saltiest sea dog would fear a voyage through the ship graveyard

BUY NOW, SLAY LATER

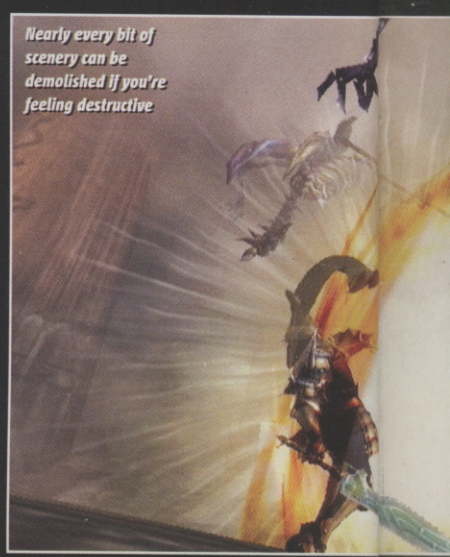
As you slice and skewer your way across the evil-ravaged lands of Otogi, you'll amass gold coins to spend on weapon upgrades and blistering new spells.

You can even repair your battle-blunted blades to get that just-stepped-out-of-the-salon sheen to your steel.

At the end of each level, your streak of destruction is awarded gold coins

The shop catalogue sports a wide selection of pointy objects

Race back into battle to break in that nice new blade you've just bought



Nearly every bit of scenery can be demolished if you're feeling destructive

The graphics engine can manage tons of monsters on top of the gorgeous scenery

The attention to detail in replicating historical settings is staggering

Obstructing the base prevents this mighty erection from spewing froth

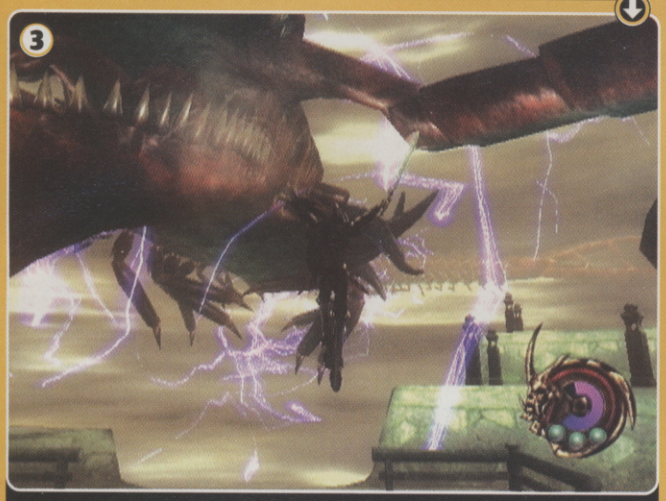
WHO'S THE DADDY?

At the end of each level you'll usually be thrown into an apocalyptic showdown with an über-demon. And they're not very nice, put it like that.

Not only do they make Otogi's other hellish brethren look like Barbie dolls, but it'll take a good deal of noggin-juice to suss out their weaknesses. Either that or pure, unrelenting fury. You don't just have to be brainy to win at this game you know.

If this unholy stinking-of-fish sea squid sinks your ship, you're done for

When the moon is obscured by clouds this boss is untouchable. Whoa, sinister!



The legs on that... Kicking giant centipede butt will tax even the most ferocious warrior

– one minute you'll be hacking at giant molluscs to prevent your ghost ship from sinking as it sails soundlessly across a galleon-festooned graveyard, the next you'll be sloshing around in waist-deep waters shattering towering pillars to topple a massive temple.

The elegant control system enables Raikoh to execute brutal beatings, gravity-defying dashes and magic spells with a simple tap of a button, or string attacks together for wincingly powerful offensive combos. What's more, the fully adjustable camera ensures you won't be completely oblivious to a backside invasion from the demonic hordes when things get frantic.

As superb as Otogi's gameplay mechanics are, they pale in comparison to the sheer eye-licking beauty of the game's visuals. With lushly detailed worlds and textures so crisp they could slice your eyeballs clean in two, Otogi is like tiny mittens for your retinas. Throw in the relentless droves of absolutely massive – and bizarre – enemies and you've got some of the most fearsome and frenetic, if strangely serene, action on the Xbox yet.

While it's possible to romp through the title by abusing the speed-dash button to scoot around enemies and obstacles, drastically reducing longevity, you'd be doing yourself and the game a huge disservice. Every thrilling moment you spend with Otogi will have you purring like a cat that's swallowed an electric razor. Buy it, savour it and revel in its fraught yet satisfying gameplay experience.

CVG VERDICT

Uniquely stylish, perfectly realised, slash 'em up action. The gorgeous visuals and haunting musical score is just the icing on its big fat 10,000-calorie gameplay cake. **Matt W**

- Massively varied and engaging level design
- Silky smooth control system
- Tear-wellingly beautiful graphics and sound

- The see-everything temptation to romp through the quest could ruin longevity
- Makes everything else look drab in comparison

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Devil May Cry (PS2) ■ Shinobi (PS2)

Tom Clancy's GHOST RECON ISLAND THUNDER

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | ● COST: £19.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-16 ● OUT: NOW | ● PUB: UBI SOFT ● DEV: RED STORM ● WWW.GHOSTRECON.COM

RUSHING INTO BATTLE IS BAD FOR YOUR STEALTH

Tramps are getting really aggressive these days but you know, what can you do?

Your team-mates will pick off bad guys before you even spot them

The life of a soldier can't all be capering about in bushes and smearing your face with mud. Imagine how rubbish it must be knowing that every step you take might be your last.

Like its predecessor, Island Thunder brings this dubious pleasure to your living room. It's a standalone collection of 15 new missions, so you won't have to have the original to play it. With the first democratic elections about to take place in Cuba, the Ghosts are in charge of making sure everything goes smoothly – and that means putting bullets in the heads of bad guys.

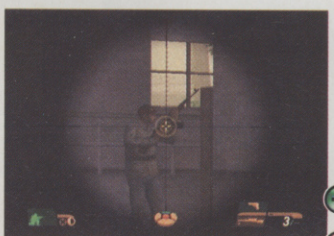
WHAT DO YOU RECON?

You're still in charge of up to six team-mates, flicking between them to carry out your tactical plans. There's a huge emphasis on planning and the natural hesitancy that goes along with it. Rush into a combat zone and you'll end up bloodier than an abattoir floor. Work out what you're going to do carefully – your life, and the life of your team-mates depends on it. Since it's game over if one of your team dies, it makes for a tense experience. The multiplayer is a different matter since you can hopefully rely on your mates to help you out, and it's even better when you can whisper tactical commands into your headset.

Island Thunder's unforgiving nature means you'll need to love it to get the best from it. If you can stand the bumhole-clenching tension and the harsh difficulty, it'll reward you like a well-maintained assault rifle.

You'd think terrorists would do something productive with a nice farm, but oh no

You'll get less messy if you shoot from here



Terrorists love their guns. Look, he's giving it a kiss! Question is, is that a Frenchie?

CVG VERDICT

Requires more strategic planning than a night on the town when you're supposed to be grounded – but the payback is just as rewarding when it all works out. **Graeme**

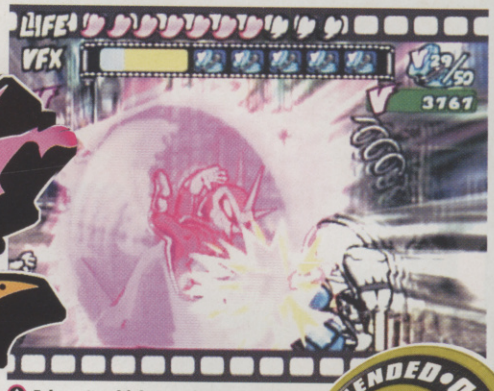
- Rewarding tactical planning
- Intensely realistic
- Whispering on the headset is wicked

- Harsh and unforgiving
- Favours thought over action
- It's bloody hard

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Ghost Recon ■ Conflict Desert Storm (PC, PS2, Xbox)

Viewtiful Joe



Take out multiple enemies with a spin kick, but do your stretches first

Bits of bad guys fly all over the place as you smack them up

You can bash enemies through each other and the scenery. Wallop!

RECOMMENDED • CVG • RECOMMENDED

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING

COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: OCTOBER 24
PUB: CAPCOM ● DEV: TEAM VIEWTIFUL ● WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM

MORE STYLISH THAN NEO, MORE ATHLETIC THAN JACKIE CHAN – JOE'S OUR FAVE ACTION HERO

Viewtiful Joe looks so cool everyone stops to look at it. But the best thing about it is that as you pirouette across the screen like a ballet dancer, ducking fists and side-stepping bullets, anyone who's watching will think you're a genius.

That's what makes Viewtiful Joe so great – it's simple to play but consistently makes you feel like the coolest cat on Earth.

Makes sense, because this is the story of a guy who's just been sucked into his favourite movie. He gets to be a superhero with a flame red suit, a flowing cape and a truly awesome helmet. He's having one of the coolest experiences of his life, and so are you.

To say it's a 2D side-scrolling beat 'em up doesn't do it justice. Sure, the graphics are flat cartoon drawings, but they move and twist and flip all over the place. It's like being inside a 3D comic book with the bangs and flashes all up in your face.

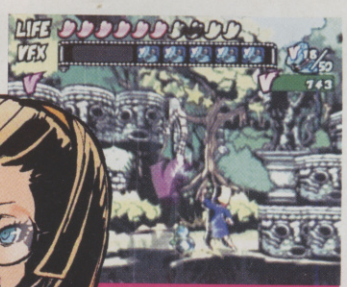
IT'S A VIEWTIFUL DAY

The fighting is more akin to the button-bashing school of thought, but it works better than ever. The controls are really simple, so kicking the cogs out of bad dudes feels totally natural.

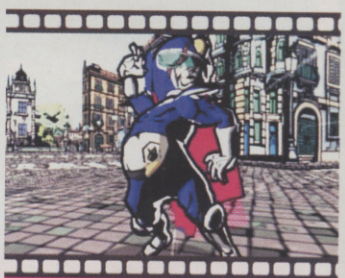
Combine that with the superhero powers Captain Blue bestows on you for some real style. You can slow down or speed up time, or make Joe's body become a flaming, spinning weapon. The powers are limited, but use them to chain together awesome attacks and they recharge.

There are puzzles too, but they're all solved with the minimum of fuss. There's never any dull key searching or backtracking, just superpowers and punches – which is the way we like it.

It's simple but challenging, and feels so cool you'll never get bored. Whether you're ducking bullets in slow-mo like a Technicolor Neo or flame-punching a bad guy through a chandelier, just remember to acknowledge your audience. CVG



Run out of superhero powers and Joe returns to his ordinary form

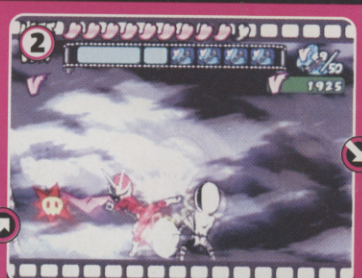


Captain Blue's let himself go a bit but can still teach you a thing or two. Or three

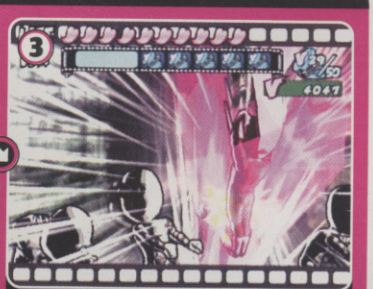
SUPER POWER-UPS

Captain Blue, Joe's pot-bellied superhero mentor, teaches him some sweet moves to help bust some bad guy heads. All in the most stylish way possible, of course...

Use slow motion to fling bullets back at gunslingers



Speed up time and the clouds zip past as you batter everything. It's elemental, man



Zoom turns Joe into a burning kung-fu dervish. Now that's a handy function on your camera

Computer and Video Games VERDICT

With superhero gameplay that makes you feel like a Ninja and a visual style like a firework display in a dark room, Viewtiful Joe is more blazin' than Satan's bonfire. **Graeme**

- Simple yet complex to play
- Cool visual style
- Makes you feel like a gaming guru

- Later stages rock hard
- Sometimes a bit too chaotic!

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Super Smash Bros. Melee (GC)

Buffy the Vampire Slayer™ CHAOS BLEEDS

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING ● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: OCTOBER 24 ● PUB: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL ● DEV: EUROCOM SOFTWARE ● WWW.BUFFYGAME.COM

LAUGH IN THE FACE OF DANGER... WELL, DELIVER A FEW KILLER QUIPS. SCOOBY GANG OVERLOAD!

The Greatest TV Show Ever™ may have finished, but the spirit lives on in the multi-format sequel to the Xbox original.

Created by official Buffy novel and comic book writers Christopher Golden and Thomas E Sniegoski, Chaos Bleeds is designed to dovetail neatly into the story arc of Series 5. Which means Mom is dead, but Buffy isn't. Yet. Some familiar faces have returned to Sunnydale, and not all of them are pleasant. Some you thought were dead, some that smell dead, and some you only wish were. No spoilers.

SACRED DUTY... YADA YADA YADA

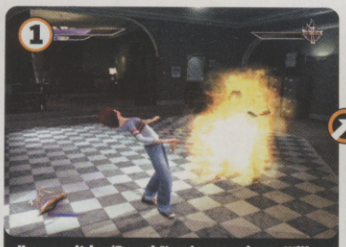
The first game was a useful introduction to the Buffyverse, but had significant flaws, including linear and one-dimensional gameplay plus an annoying save system. The wretched save system remains, but everything else is greatly improved. The action still revolves around punching, kicking and using all manner of exotic weaponry (Gorgon stakes, anyone?) to dust vampires, but the introduction of five more playable characters (including Sid the ever-randy wooden dummy) adds much needed variety – especially as each character has their own very particular fighting style. The puzzle elements have also been beefed up this time around, giving you a chance to flex your brain muscles as well as other parts. On PS2 the cutscenes still look somewhat grainy, but the in-game detail is impressive. It really feels like you're walking around the demonic hot spots of Sunnydale with all the attendant creepiness. The plot-driven structure, coupled with the eerily atmospheric soundtrack successfully conjures up the cool sensation of participating in one gigantic interactive episode of the show. Fans will love it, and everyone else should prepare to be converted.

Vamps and other assorted icky creatures of darkness seem much more detailed this time

JUST BRING IT, LOSER!

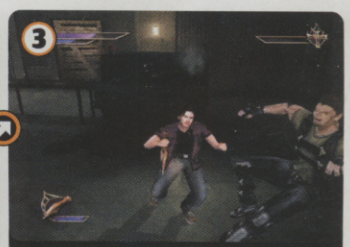
While the first game focused on all-Buffy, all-the-time slayage, the gameplay in Chaos Bleeds has been expanded to reflect the genuine ensemble nature of the show – and is all the better for it.

Now you get to play through whole levels as one of five other Scooby gang regulars (Spike, Xander, Willow, Faith and one over-sexed ventriloquist's dummy), as well as the pert blonde butt-kicker herself.



You won't be 'Bored Now' once wiccan Willow gets her spell book out. Hell fiends beware!

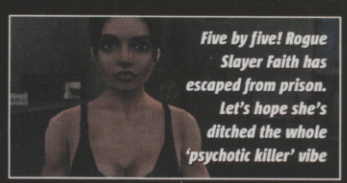
Undead Bufster love-puppy Spike's attack style is animalistic, feral and uncannily accurate



Xander has no special skills but he's good with weapons and fights like a docker

Multiplayer maps include Bunny Catcher. Just don't tell Bunny-phobic demon Anya

Dusting a vamp is easier now thanks to the tweaked control system



Five by five! Rogue Slayer Faith has escaped from prison. Let's hope she's ditched the whole 'psychotic killer' vibe

Games VERDICT

At last Buffy fans can rejoice. A massive improvement on the first game, with virtually all aspects buffed up (cheers!). By the third game they should really have nailed it. **Maura**

- Cracking script, full of puns and in-jokes
- Superb voice acting from cast faves
- Quality cast interviews and out-takes
- No mid-level saves!
- Sarah Michelle Gellar and Alyson Hannigan not doing their own voice-overs. Boo!

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Alias (PC, PS2, Xbox) ■ Vampire: Bloodlines (PC)

Yu-Gi-Oh! THE DUELISTS OF THE ROSES

THE ART OF WAR

What makes Yu-Gi-Oh! so addictive? Purely and simply, it's all about thinking your way out of trouble when the odds are stacked against you.

Just like in chess, the new card system means that you have to think about your cards' positioning on the board as well as which monsters to summon.

In a Yu-Gi-Oh! duel, you can go from despair to jubilation in seconds

One minute you're gasping your last, at the mercy of a powerful card...

And the next, the perfect card miraculously pops into your hand

Now you can turn the tables and wipe the floor with your tormentor!

Even the monsters try to copy Yugi's spiky quiff

Watching monsters tear each other apart makes all our lives worthwhile

The more the map opens out, the harder the battles become. A bit like life when you think about it...

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING ● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-2 ● OUT: NOW ● PUB: KONAMI ● DEV: KONAMI JAPAN ● URL: WWW.KONAMI.COM

IT'S JUST LIKE SNAP, ONLY WITH MONSTERS AND THINKING

By now, Yu-Gi-Oh! fans will have realised that CVG is your friend. We love Yu-Gi-Oh! and we're just as excited as you are about spreading the word. Sometimes we even cry about it. It's a tear duct problem, nothing to worry about.

There are, of course, those who still shudder at the thought of playing a game based on some strange trading cards with a spiky haired cutie hero, a bandaged-up bloke called Simon and lots of monsters with names like (deep breath) Wicked Dragon with the Ersatz Head. There's no doubt about it, Yu-Gi-Oh! isn't for everyone. If, however, you feel like taking time out to pit your wits against a frighteningly intelligent computer opponent (or even your mates!) and learning a strangely addictive style of strategic gameplay, step this way, but mind Simon's bandages.

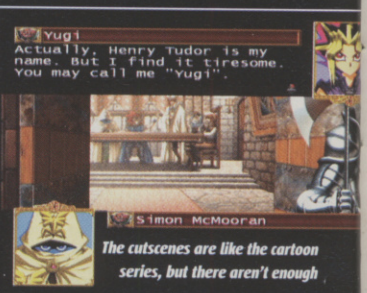
DOUBLE DRAGON

As ever, arch-enemies Yugi and Kaiba are butting heads and trading insults but this time within the historical context of the Wars of the Roses, way back in 1480s England. Imagine the intense rivalry between Leeds and Manchester United only with beards and ringlets. You can choose to align yourself either with Yugi or Seto Kaiba, and do battle with some very familiar faces and their trademark decks to win back the precious Rose cards.

Visually, it's pretty basic fare with few cherries on top, but the 3D monster battles are fun to watch, and the actual raw gameplay is as compelling as ever. Perfect for fans who want to polish up on their duelling skills, but we'd like to see the PS2's powers stretched a little more next time around. CVG

All your faves feature, including Weevil with his pesky insects, and posh Pegasus Crawford

Think we made it up? There really is a card called Wicked Dragon with the Ersatz Head



The cutscenes are like the cartoon series, but there aren't enough

It's not all about lizards and dragons. Sometimes mermaid wackiness ensues

Combine two cards to create behemoths like Giga-Tech Wolf

Terrain plays an important part. Don't get stuck behind an impassable Labyrinth

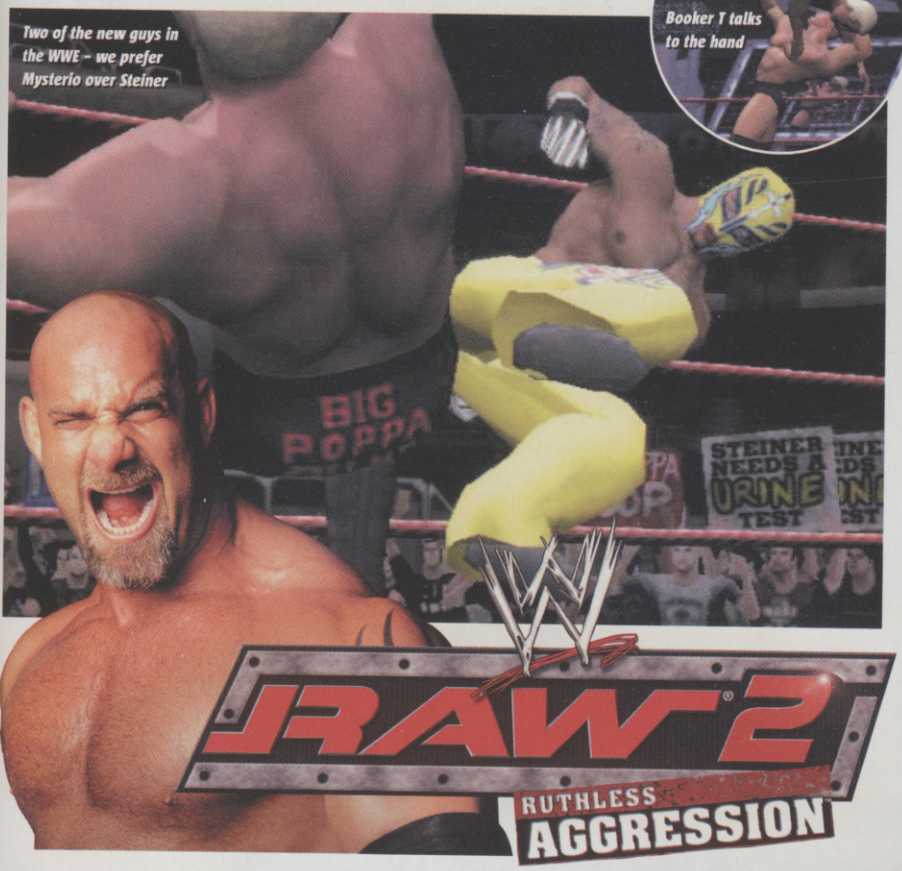
computer and video games VERDICT

Disappointing in terms of presentation, but near faultless when it comes to handling the complexities of card duelling. The extensive tutorial tries to ease you in gently. Maura

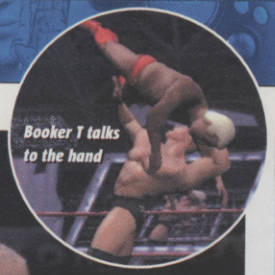
- ■ Amazing AI
- ■ New card movement battle system
- ■ Cards and monsters are beautifully depicted
- ■ Incredibly annoying music that sounds like a cat trapped inside a rusty barrel organ
- ■ Hardcore gameplay could alienate converts

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THIS... ■ Yu-Gi-Oh! Worldwide Edition (GBA)



Two of the new guys in the WWE – we prefer Mysterio over Steiner



Booker T talks to the hand

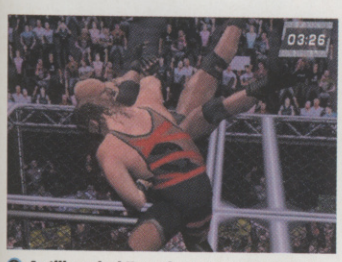
RAW 2 RUTHLESS AGGRESSION

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £39.99 | PLAYERS: 1-4 | OUT: OCTOBER 10 | PUB: THQ | DEV: ANCHOR | WWW.THQ.COM

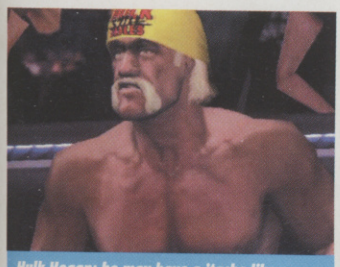
THE ORIGINAL WAS A DAMP SQUIB – THIS IS MORE LIKE IT!

Finally Raw feels like a game tailor-made for the Xbox rather than something thrown together in a hurry. Raw 2 makes up for last year's weak attempt at recreating the WWE by offering more characters, more matches and possibly the most impressive Create-A-Wrestler mode we've ever seen.

Luckily, the in-ring wrestling side has been beefed up as well. Although the action still feels a little slow, it is considerably faster than last year's game. Add new match types including Hardcore, Street Fight, TLC and Hell In A Cell, and you can see how Raw 2 is looking like a worthwhile sequel.



A still-masked Kane demonstrates why he's a force to be reckoned with. Don't mess



Hulk Hogan: he may have a 'tache like a crazy walrus, but he's got big chest muscles

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

The best news is that Raw 2 really utilises the Xbox hard drive in a way that other consoles can only dream about. The Season mode reacts to your decisions, storing your interaction with other wrestlers so they influence future matches, alignments and feuds.

Up to four players can compete in Season mode simultaneously and with over 55 superstars to choose from, including your own creations, the title belts are sure to change hands often. Speaking of the Create modes, although the physical creation of new wrestlers is still a little limited, you can really go to town on ring entrances. With full control over pyrotechnics, lighting and – best of all – the ability to rip CDs onto the Xbox, you can finally walk down the ramp to some decent music.

It might not have the class of SmackDown! but Raw 2 is moving the series in the right direction.

computer and video games VERDICT

A vast improvement over the original, Raw 2 offers plenty of variety with more characters, match types and plenty of customisable options. If only it were a little faster! **Alex H**

- CD ripping for custom ring entrances
- Season mode, where the stories are up to you
- Kane still wears his mask

- Too much graphical clipping
- In-ring it still feels too slow

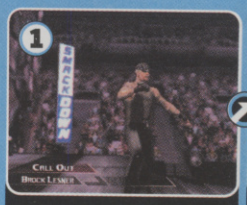
7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Soulcalibur II (Xbox) ■ WWE SmackDown! 4 (PS2)

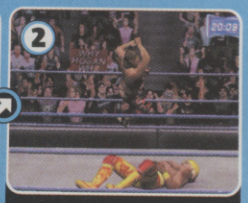
WHO NEEDS STORYLINES?

The Season mode in Raw 2 doesn't contain scripted feuds or any other pre-set stories. Instead events are determined by your actions, as you not only get to wrestle but interact with all the other scheduled matches.

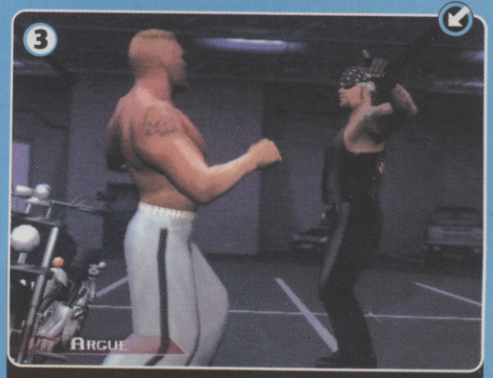
You can choose to interrupt other wrestlers, attack them on their way to the ring, set a trap for them backstage or steal items from their kit bag. As the Season unfolds, these actions determine who feuds with who and what the fans think of you.



Undertaker starts to feud with Brock Lesnar by calling him to the ring



The feud heads to the parking lot where both wrestlers continue to argue



Someone's about to be set up for a surprise attack...

ALAN
Class: Warrior
Race: Barbarian

>Bashful Barbarian seeks fun loving Druid with insatiable thirst for blood*;-)

You can find ALAN@Coldwind Hall, Norrath.

A unique EverQuest online experience now available exclusively on PlayStation 2

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www.eqoa-game.com

fun, anyone?
PlayStation.2

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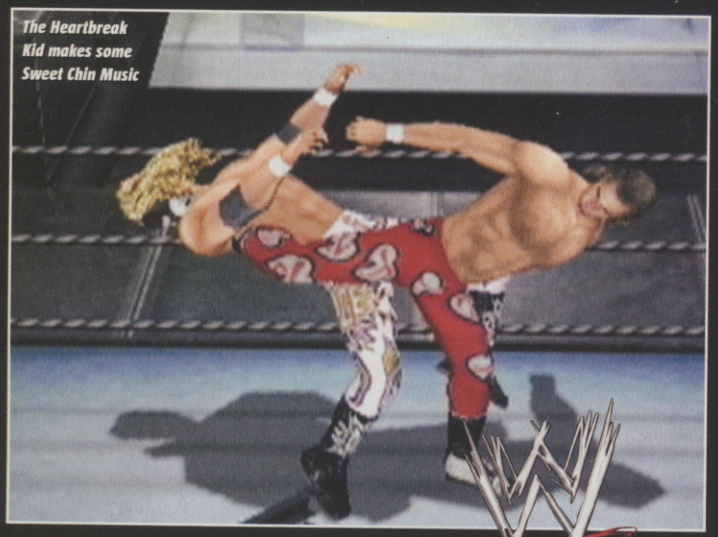
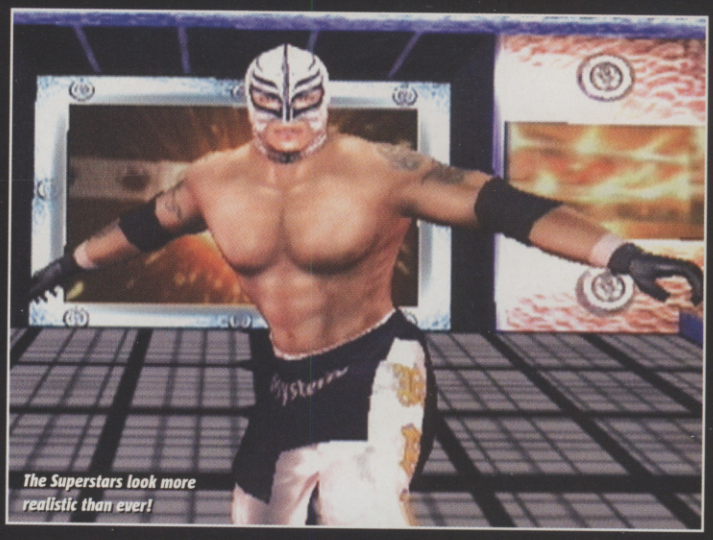
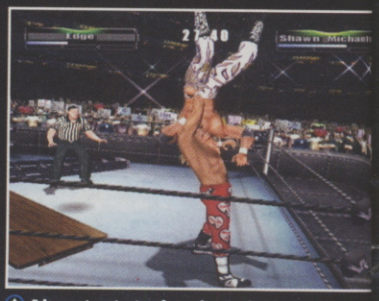

The Heartbreak Kid makes some Sweet Chin Music

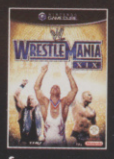

The Superstars look more realistic than ever!

WRESTLEMANIA XIX


Edge gets a taste of gravity. Probably not a taste he's going to want to acquire

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £34.99 | PLAYERS: 1-4 | OUT: SEPTEMBER 26 | PUB: THQ | DEV: YUKES | WWW.THQ.COM

THE GAME YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR – BUT ONLY IF YOU'RE INTO WRESTLING BY NUMBERS



WrestleMania is the biggest event on the WWE's calendar. A show where legendary matches can make or break careers and where fans can expect the unexpected.

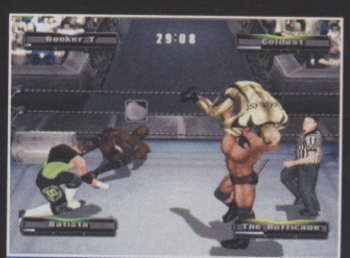
Pity the same can't be said about the console version. Don't get us wrong, this is still a competent wrestling game, but if you want the biggest around, you'll have to get a PS2 and the latest version of SmackDown!

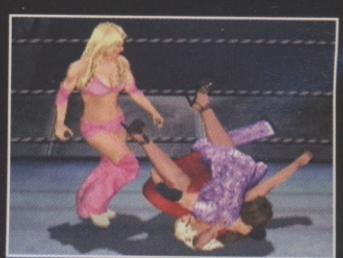
This GameCube exclusive has the same development team as SmackDown! – the graphics even have an edge over the PS2 title, but once you get into the depth and control of the game it just pales in comparison.

Goldust tastes blood and he likes it!

BETTER AND WORSE

Sure, there are plenty of new features thrown into the mix to make this worth your money if you're a fan of WrestleMania 18, but newcomers may be best advised to stay away. If you're back for more, what's changed? Well, the game engine for a start, with more emphasis on counter and reversal moves. It's a good idea, but poorly realised. Counters here only work if you have the timing of an Olympic official's watch. Location Specific Damage has been introduced and it makes submission matches much more fun to

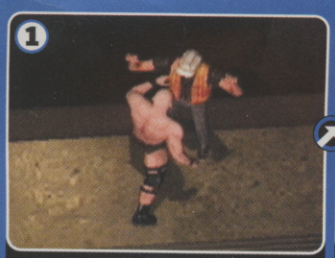

Batista keeps fit with some Goldust push-ups while the ref does jogging on the spot

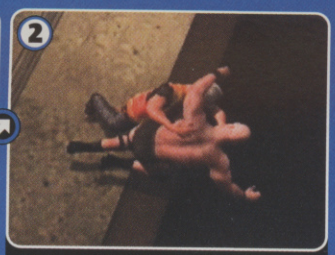

Trish and Stephanie go legs akimbo. Watch those heels love, they'll have your eye out

NOT SO SWEET REVENGE

There's no Season mode in WrestleMania XIX – instead we're 'treated' to Revenge mode. Here, Vince McMahon has booted your favourite WWE star out of the company. But don't worry, Stephanie is going to help you get reinstated.

Now watch in horror as, instead of facing a succession of jobbers, you have to walk the streets in nothing but your ring attire and fight security guards and construction workers! It's like the game's been invaded by the Village People. Did someone add this in when everyone was on lunch? And how come nobody noticed?


Stone Cold gets into a fight with a builder. See, he's even got a hard hat


Don't want to lose your balance there, mate. Could Stone Cold be a goner?

The builder looks on in disbelief. But no! We have a fingertip situation!

Is this the end? It can't be! Stone Cold falls down into the darkness...

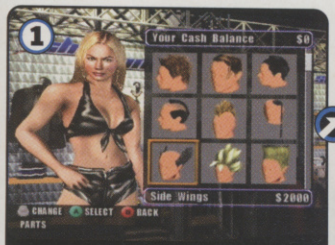
A bloodied Steve Austin climbs back into the ring, and lives to fight another day...

The builder on the other hand, doesn't! Now that's how you throw someone off a ledge

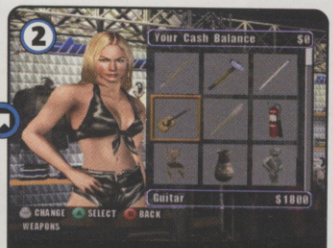
BUY THE T-SHIRT

It's not all doom and gloom. One idea in WMXIX is actually pretty good – so good that it's going to be in the next SmackDown! too.

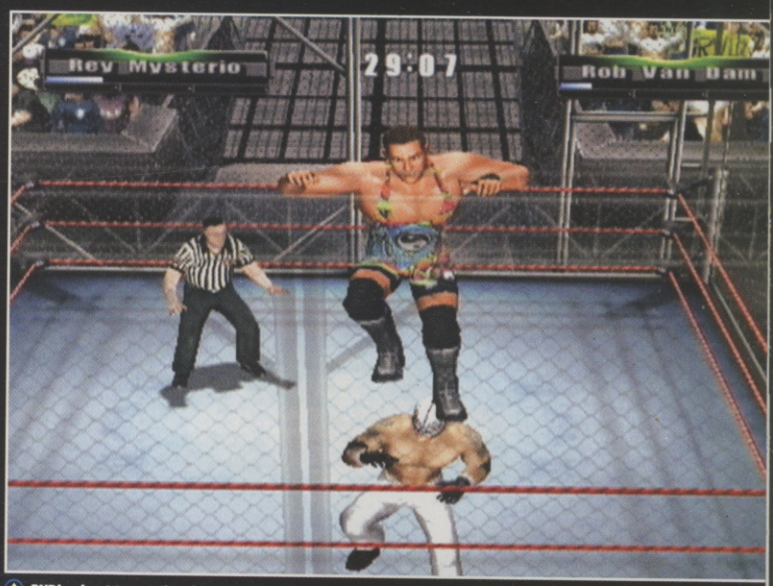
It's called ShopZone, a place where you can use hard-earned dollars to buy lots of unlockable items. They've got everything in here from new moves and attire for CAWs to new arenas, entrances and weapons. Yee-har!



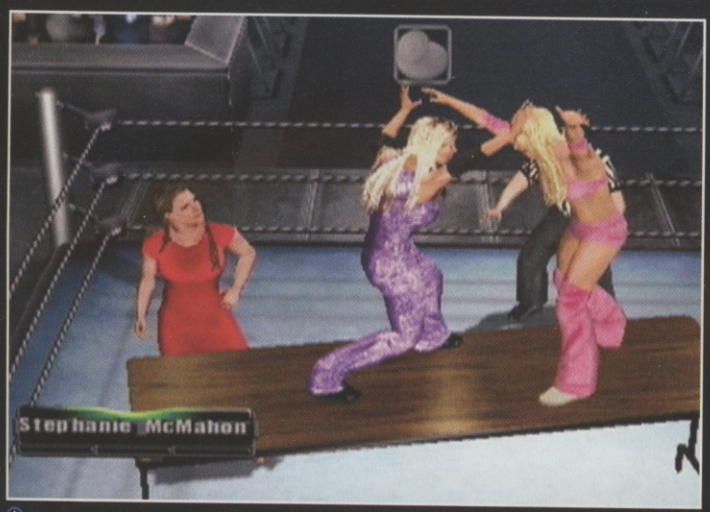
Use your winning points to buy accessories like Heiachi hair. Check the crazy Side Wings



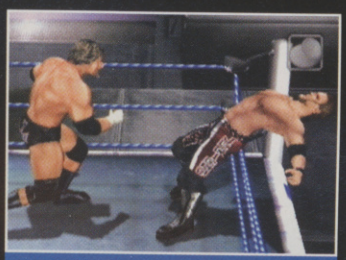
Stacy Keibler tries to sell us a guitar when we said we want the fire extinguisher...



RVD's about to get the victory by escaping the cage. Is that cheating? Seems a bit like running away

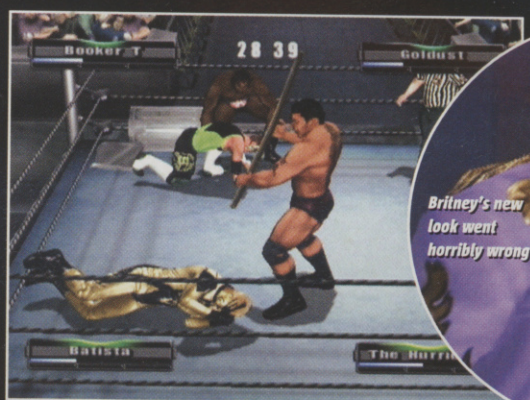


This is what happens when red, violet and pink clash in the ring. You need a table to break it up



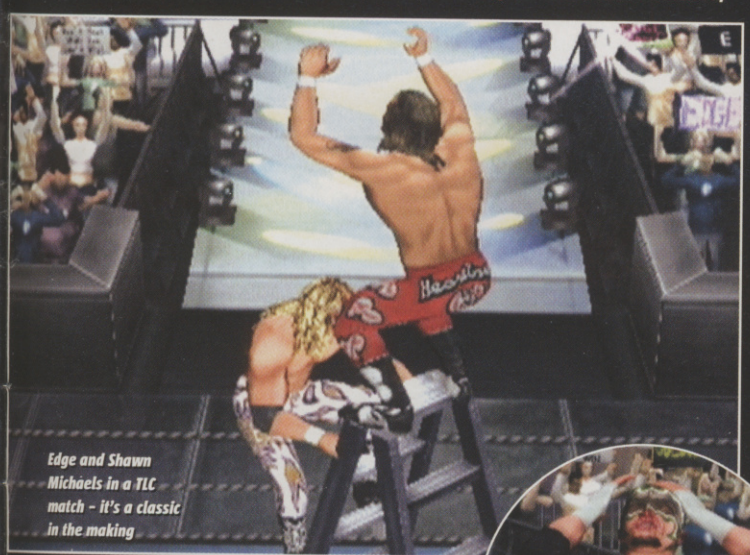
Chris Jericho finds time to recline in his match. He could do with a bit of a sit-down

It's so silly the lengths you need to go to to get men to dance together

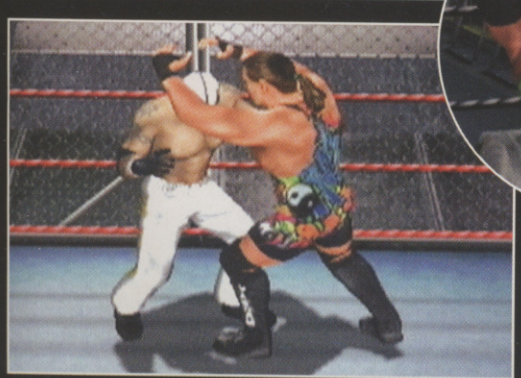


Who does he think he is, Conan? But Goldust is asking for it wearing that

Britney's new look went horribly wrong



Edge and Shawn Michaels in a TLC match – it's a classic in the making



Now Hurricane feels the scarlet flow. Anyone got a hanky?

Two of the WWE's most explosive stars inside a steel cage

play. However, due to clumsy and awkward controls you'll often find yourself going for a pin when you meant to execute another grapple move on your opponent.

Blood is another new feature that has been absent from the WWE games for too many years. Strike your opponent hard enough and you'll bust them wide open – well, give them a little nosebleed. We're happy to see blood back in the game, but can we have more than just nosebleeds please? Then there's the Story mode. No, not a Career mode where you go after WWE glory, or better still a Season mode where you battle different opponents, week in, week out. Nope, the Story mode in WMXIX is, to put it mildly, idiotic. It's called Revenge and it sees the Superstar of your choice kicked out of the WWE by owner Vince McMahon and forced to fight his way back into contention. Not by slumming it against low league opposition – no, that would be too sensible. Instead you have to beat up security guards and construction workers (see boxout).

Despite looking better and featuring more options, it's hard to say that WMXIX is better than last year's game. With a bit more thought this could have been a serious contender, but the mantra for churning SmackDown! titles out must be less thought, more haste. Shame.

GAMES VERDICT

Looks better than WrestleMania 18, has more options and a more up-to-date roster. But once you settle in the improvements become glaringly absent. A step backwards for the series. **Alex H**

- Buying new items in the ShopZone
- Entrances are greatly improved
- The hairstyles in Create-A-Wrestler

- Revenge mode. OK it's a sub-game, but please!
- So much body and mat clipping it's untrue
- Counters – write in if you manage to do one

6 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Final Fantasy Tactics (GBA) Worms Blast (GBA)

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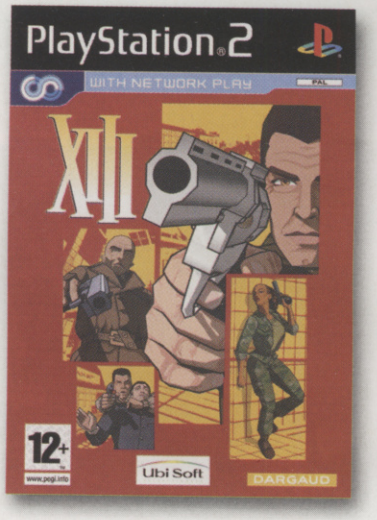

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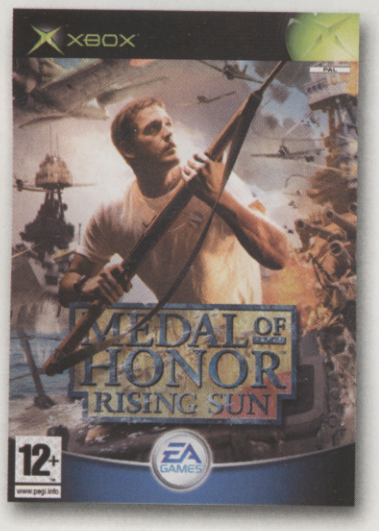

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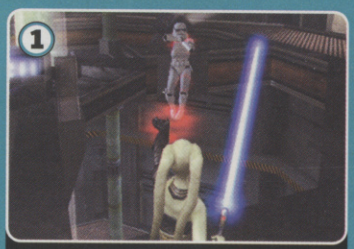
CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

Once you become a fully-fledged Jedi Knight, you get to choose a new lightsaber, with three distinct variations to decide between. There's the conventional single saber, dual sabers and the saber staff, each equally cool and with its own distinct fighting style.



With the single saber you can choke your foes and hack at their bits all at the same time!

The dual sabers offer the flashiest style, but it's harder to combine with Force powers

CVG's favourite, the saber staff has the most acrobatic style, with kicks and spins aplenty

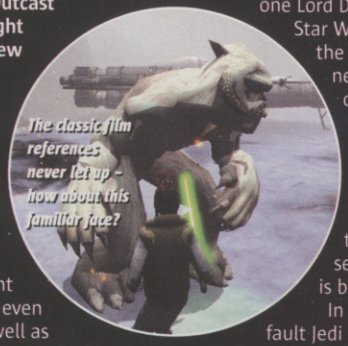
STAR WARS® JEDI KNIGHT®: JEDI ACADEMY™

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £39.99 | PLAYERS: 1-16 | OUT: SEPTEMBER 19 | PUB: ACTIVISION | DEV: RAVEN GAMES | WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/PRODUCTS/JEDIACADEMY

BECOME THE MOST POWERFUL JEDI EVER IN THE NEW STAR WARS ADVENTURE

Jedis: the Ninjas of deep space. The ass-kicking crime-fighters are custom built for games, and the real crime is the lack of good Jedi titles over the years. Last year's Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast was a step in the right direction, but the new sequel finishes the work it started in stunning fashion.

As is only proper in any Jedi title, the key to this game is the lightsaber. Unlike the previous title, you're given one right from the start – you even get to design it, as well as your own player character. Early on your moves are limited, but as your powers grow you unlock a truly spectacular range of spinning, leaping and rolling saber attacks. These are complemented by the ace Force powers, 16 in total, as well as a bunch of conventional guns, rocket launchers and the like.


The classic film references never let up – how about this familiar face?

TOP OF THE CLASS

Once you're in the thick of the game, you can pick and choose which missions you want to do, taking in such familiar terrain as Tatooine, Hoth, an Imperial cruiser and the stately home of one Lord D Vader. The Star Wars-iness of the game is never in question, rewarding you with fan-pleasing cameos and references throughout, and the sense of atmosphere is brilliant.

In fact, there's little to fault Jedi Academy. The pacing and plot are excellent while the complexity of the combat builds gradually, keeping you hooked. By the time you're a Jedi Knight you'll be able to run along walls, see through buildings, brainwash your enemies with mind tricks and choke them like an insolent Moff. And you know that's gotta feel good.

Arm-wrestling the hungry Rancor was never going to be a good idea...

By the end of the game you'll be gutting dark Jedi like so many fish

There's an Xbox version currently in the works

The game switches from first- to third-person view whenever your saber is drawn

It's moments like this that make you wish you'd stayed on the farm with Uncle Owen...

GAMES VERDICT

Every bit as good as KOTOR. The Force-wielding, saber-spinning action never lets up, and combined with some excellent levels and a solid plot, it's pure Jedi genius. **Anthony**

- Loads of acrobatic saber moves and 16 cool Force powers
- The atmosphere is classic Star Wars, with no hint of Gungans
- Combat is sometimes a bit random
- Some of the Force powers are underused

9 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... NOLF 2 (PC) Max Payne (PC)

BREATH OF FIRE™ DRAGON QUARTER™

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING
COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: OCTOBER 10
PUB: CAPCOM ● DEV: CAPCOM ● URL: WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM/BREATH_OF_FIRE_V

FLAGELLATE YOUR INNER ROLE-PLAYING MASOCHIST

Don't be calling us gaming wussies, but this latest Breath Of Fire adventure is like being forced to fight a whole motorbike gang with both arms tied behind your back. Blindfold.

Ryu's journey from sewer-sweeping grunt to über-powerful dragon demon, as beautiful as it looks, is one of the cruellest games we've played in ages. With save points as far as four hours apart, and original gameplay features that hinder rather than help your progress, this is clearly a game for grizzled role-playing veterans who feel at home wielding a level 53 Battle Mace.

OVERLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

RPGs are usually so lengthy that most people struggle to get through them just once. BoF is far shorter but encourages you to play over and over by using a new feature called 'Scenario Overlay System' or SOL.

When all of your team-mates die in battle, you get the option to 'SOL Restart' or 'SOL Restore'. If you restart you begin the game *from the very beginning* but with most of your gained experience, weapons and cash carried over. Choose to restore and you return to your last save (normally quite some time ago) with just your weapons and cash intact. It's pure evil at first because the game sets you up to be defeated. Your only reward for this bizarre system is that you see new cutscenes that elaborate major story points each time you play through. Regardless, we'd much prefer to be going forwards in a role-player than constantly thrown back to areas we've done to death.

Ultimately BoF is an overly-challenging adventure that seems to rely on a paucity of saves, and cruel and unforgiving gameplay gimmicks to extend its lifespan. Like Square Enix's recent Unlimited Saga, BoF attempts to push next-gen RPGs in a new direction but isn't all that successful.

When alerted to your presence a '!' will appear, so distract 'em with a trap

The visuals get better the further into the game you get. Might take ages to do that, though

The bats are a pain to fight cos they each take a turn against you. Not fair!

D-DAY AGONY!

Arguably the most controversial new feature in Dragon Quarter is the D-Counter.

This gauge increases as you use Ryu's dragon abilities in battle. You can't reset it and when it's full it's Game Over and you have to SOL Restart (which is bad). Thankfully the original battle system, where you use traps and bait to tactically engage with enemies, helps make up for the D-Counter frustrations.

Use the Dragon Dash to escape battle but it'll fill your meter. Death comes soon after

Using points to move and attack in battle gives you a lot more freedom

Dragon power-enhanced attacks are powerful but fill up your D-Counter like everything else...

Giant genetically mutated chickens roam the sewers of the future

The FX when you unleash the big guns are eye-tickling

Stay away from the teeth-end of this wiggler

computer and video games VERDICT

Lots of new ideas here but only one – the great new battle system – really works at all. The constant restarts and harsh difficulty make this more frustrating than fun. **Lee**

- Story will entice you to play through the pain
- Nice cel-shading and an awesome soundtrack
- New gameplay ideas to flex your RPG muscles

- There simply aren't enough places to save
- It's rock hard at first and dead unfair
- It's actually a really short game

6 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Dark Chronicle (PS2) ■ Unlimited Saga (PS2)

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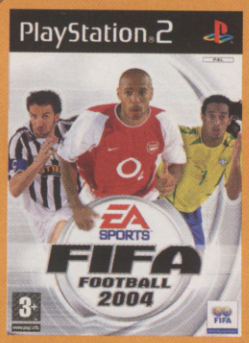

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

Release Date: 31 October 2003

FIFA Football 2004 returns as the true authority in football gaming. All new Off The Ball™ Control lets you control the man on the ball and the men off it. A new Career Mode gives you the chance to take a team from the lower divisions, battle through ranks, sign new players, and turn them into champions.

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Release Date: 24 October 2003

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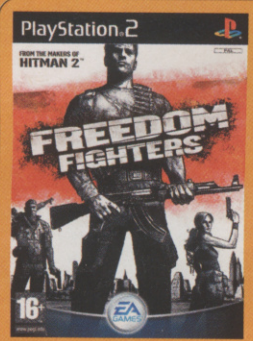

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Release Date: 26 September 2003

In a world where the Soviet Union won the Cold War, a fierce conflict is unfolding in the streets of America. Taking on the role of Christopher Stone, players evolve from an average New Yorker into a fearless patriot who recruits and leads an army of freedom fighters in the streets of New York City.

XBOX · PC · PS2

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Release Date: 21 November 2003

Specifically designed for the console, Total Club Manager 2004 offers total management control through an intuitive navigation system and dynamic user interface, while integrating the most comprehensive player and team database on the PS2.

XBOX · PC · PS2

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Release Date: 26 September 2003

SoulCalibur™ II is the third installment in the hugely successful "Soul" franchise. The game offers massive refinements in its arena design, offensive and defensive combat and battle tactics, alongside improved character graphics and intuitive controls.

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The Simpsons HIT & RUN

EXCLUSIVE CVG REVIEW

GAME INFO

ONLINE GAMING

● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: NOVEMBER 7
● PUB: VIVENDI ● DEV: RADICAL ● WWW.THESIMPSONS-HITANDRUN.COM

GTA SIMPSONS-STYLE, MINUS THE PIMPS AND HOOKERS. UNLESS YOU COUNT SELMA AND PATTY

Simpsons fans are hard to please. They're used to a rich diet of quality humour and some of the best verbal and visual gags to be found anywhere on the planet.

Hence the understandable crushing disappointment when most of the Simpsons games to date have failed to deliver the goods, ending up more like Montgomery Burns' feeble handshake than Bartholomew J's righteous fist of fury. Hit & Run goes a long way towards stopping the rot.

MELLOW YELLOW

Whereas games such as Road Rage were all about ferrying fares around Springfield for cash, Hit & Run revolves around the GTA concept of using a variety of vehicles to carry out missions such as Race the Nerd to the Java Server. In GTA: Vice City, the missions involve nefarious criminal deeds. In Hit & Run, the madcap antics are strictly legit, if extremely bizarre. This is Springfield, after all.

Across 50-plus missions you'll get the chance to drive Homer, Bart, Lisa, Apu and Marge in all sorts of crazy vehicles, ranging from Bart's soapbox racer to Lisa's Malibu Stacey sports car. As the missions unfold, so does a plot of sorts, involving strange black spy vans and giant mechanical monsters.

Not that the game is all about completing missions. There are several parallel plot developments to keep track of as well, including Bart and Lisa's frantic efforts to get their hands on Bonestorm 2, the hottest videogame in Springfield.

It's fun getting the chance to poke around in other people's gardens

Cause too much mayhem and you'll trigger the Hit & Run Cop Alert

The brilliant Multiplayer Madness is one of Hit & Run's strongest selling points

Keep an eye out for ramps. There's sure to be a spectacular stunt at the other end

The vehicle handling seems very accurate. Some cars are easier to drive than others

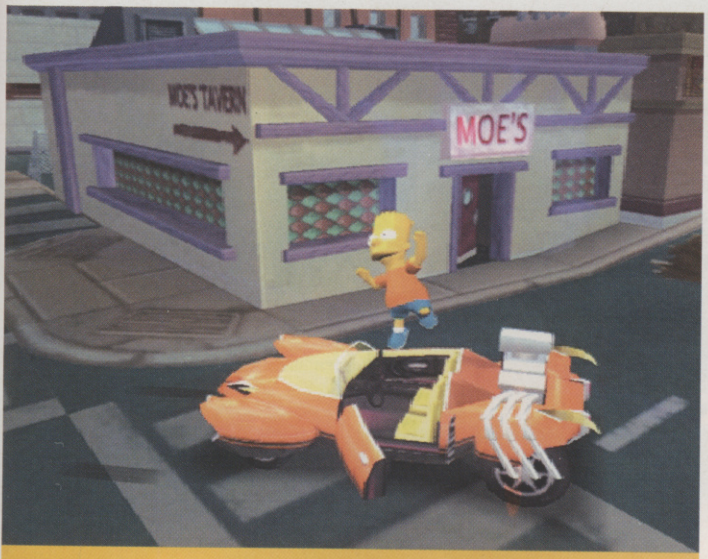
GAGGING FOR IT

A Simpsons game without gags is like Barney Gumble without a Duff beer or Krusty without his painted smile. It just wouldn't happen.

As well as being packed with all the verbal witticisms and visual gags we'd expect, in Hit & Run the chuckle factor even makes its way into the side quests. Each level has a certain number of set-piece 'gags' to activate and collect. Sweet!

When you see a glowing object walk up to it and press Triangle

Stand back and watch to see what sort of wackiness ensues



"Violence is always a valid response." The wise words of Bartholomew J Simpson

In between missions you'll have the opportunity to explore the huge environments at your leisure. You may not be able to enter every house, but you're free to roam around, stumble on secrets and wander into familiar locations such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and Camp Krusty.

SPRINGFIELD CONFIDENTIAL

Obviously, Simpsons fans will be delighted with Hit & Run. The characters have been lovingly recreated and the script is easily as witty as the show. There's so much going on in the background that devotees will want to play each mission over and over again in case they miss anything.

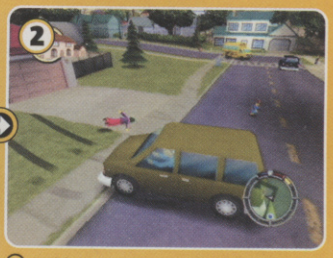
However, the gameplay is still fairly simplistic and repetitive once you strip away the beguiling humour. The difficulty level appears to be pitched at younger gamers, possibly those who would like to play a GTA-style game but are barred by the age limit. Driving around with the likes of Apu and Principal Skinner in tow and sniggering at their ravings will have you in stitches, but Vice City certainly has nothing to fear in the gameplay stakes. Older gamers will want a lot more depth for their money. CVG

Who knew that Springfield had acres of such beautiful picturesque scenery?

FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS

It can't be true. The Simpsons meets GTA? How can it be? Is Springfield's favourite dysfunctional family really mixing it with the scuzz-balls on the mean city streets, and how did they ever manage to get such a concept past the censors and other assorted buzz-killers? Relax, it's all done in the best possible Simpsons-style taste. Loser.

You can commandeer any vehicle, but you're hitching a lift rather than carjacking. Equally effective and no pesky cops. Hurrah!

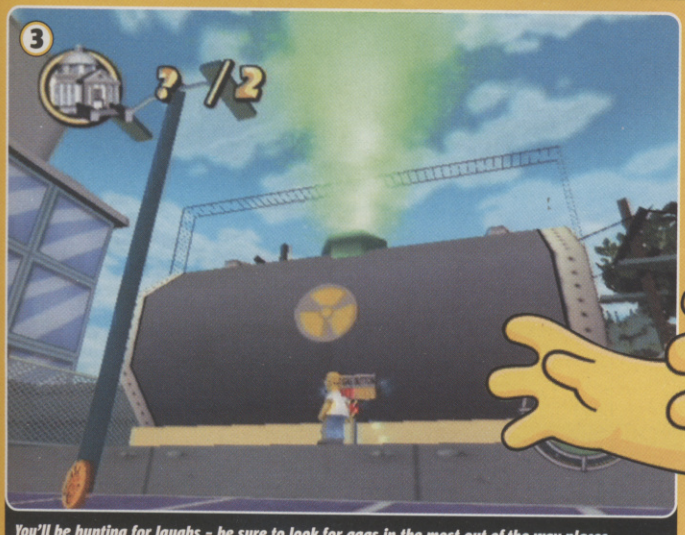


Feel free to flatten pedestrians, but expect a few stern words as they furiously kick their little legs. Still refreshingly violent, though

You can walk right up to people and hit them, but unlike in GTA you won't see any blood

Collect the big shiny coins which litter the levels and save up to buy some new threads

Homer usually likes to sleep when he's at his Power Plant job. Not today, though...



You'll be hunting for laughs – be sure to look for gags in the most out-of-the-way places

You'll never grow tired of reading all the billboards

computer and video games VERDICT

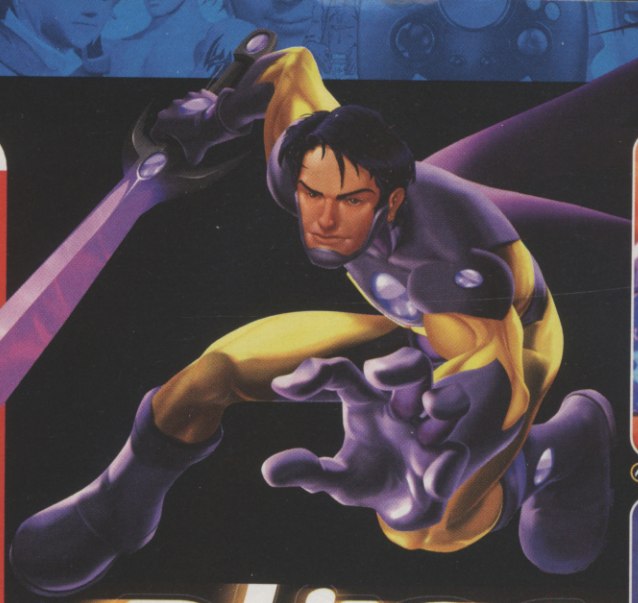
The best Simpsons game to date. Nowhere near as shocking or compelling as Vice City, but mowing down hapless Springfield residents is worryingly enjoyable. **Maura**

- ■ You'll be laughing out loud
- ■ Huge levels make you feel like you've explored every inch of Springfield

- ■ We want a Simpsons RPG
- ■ Gameplay might be too simplistic for non-Simpsons fans

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Futurama (PS2, XB, GC) ■ True Crime (PS2, XB, GC)

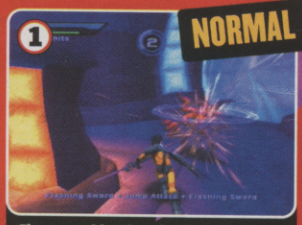


alter echo

SUITS YOU, SIR

Alter Echo gives players access to three different types of combat suit, each tailored to a particular style of fighting.

Using the suits' individual powers is essential to success and, once you've collected all three, you can easily swap between them at any time.



The normal battle suit allows Nevin to use a massive sword to hack his enemies into bite-size pieces

Although it moves slowly, the battle suit allows Nevin to fire a steady stream of bullets and powerful grenades

The cat-like stealth suit can be used to jump on enemies' heads, climb special ladders or become invisible

Stopping time is the best way to defeat groups of enemies

Kill chains of enemies in a row and you'll increase your hero's powers

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING ● COST: £34.99 (PS2) £39.99 (Xbox) ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: NOW ● PUB: THQ ● DEV: OUTRAGE GAMES ● WWW.ALTERECHO.COM

PART SPACE ADVENTURE, PART BLASTER, PART DANCING GAME – IT'S A MAD ONE

Bringing together the lightning-paced bloodshed of Devil May Cry and the addictive rhythm action of Dancing Stage may sound like a tall order, but Alter Echo just about manages it.

Set in the year 2850AD, Alter Echo finds mankind obsessed with a natural element called Plast that can be moulded by psychic 'shapers' into anything they desire, including weapons and spaceships. However, the world's most powerful shaper is holding the Earth's sole source of Plast to ransom, and now it's up to you to liberate the planet Proteus from his evil rule.

DANCE OF DEATH

Alter Echo is an action-adventure in the Devil May Cry mould where the cartoonish hero, Nevin, explores a colourful alien world. He has to defeat hordes of monsters and bosses on his way to the final showdown with Paavo, the universe's most skilled shaper.

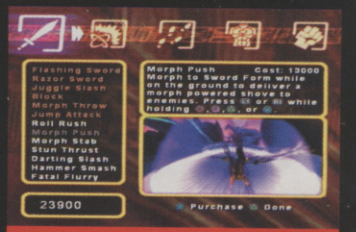
Help comes in the form of planet Proteus itself, which builds special combat suits for Nevin that allow him to tackle enemies with a sword, shoot them with powerful blasters or sneak past security cameras using his stealth skills. These suits can also be upgraded as the game unfolds, giving Nevin access to new areas of Proteus and adding tremendous depth to the non-stop battle action.

Aside from using the suits to defend himself, Nevin can also freeze reality in Time Dilations, shifting the action to a simple rhythm action puzzle game. When this happens, players use the controller's directional keys to move a glowing icon through a maze. But, if you don't hit the buttons in time to the rhythm set by the computer, the action shifts back to the real world, forcing Nevin to tackle his enemies using more traditional methods.

Kill an enemy in the Time Dilation mode to get one of these

However, while the ability to switch between suits keeps the combat fresh and exciting, the limited range of alien tormentors means that the action tends to become repetitive after a while, and the dodgy camera and poorly placed save points also prevent Alter Echo from being an essential purchase. But if you want an action-adventure that pushes the envelope with complex attacks, stylish graphics and entertaining mini games, Alter Echo is certainly worth a punt. CVG

The rhythm action-style mini games are great for breaking up the relentless fight sequences



Collect credits as you kill enemies and you can use them to buy suit upgrades

Like in Devil May Cry, you can use vertical sword swipes to juggle your hapless enemies in the air

In certain places the battle suit can turn into a cannon to pepper the landscape with hundreds of bullets. You really can make it rain lead

The battle suit is great for wiping out waves of enemies with your superior firepower

games VERDICT

Although the relentless fighting becomes tedious after a while, Alter Echo is still a compelling action-adventure that rewards the effort to discover its secrets. **Dave**

- ■ Cool suits
- ■ Compelling action
- ■ Stylish looks

- ■ Repetitive action
- ■ Some crap monsters
- ■ Won't be to everyone's taste

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Devil May Cry 2 (PS2) ■ Dancing Stage Euromix (PS2)

JUDGE DREDD

DREDD VS DEATH

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: NOW | PUB: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL ● DEV: REBELLION ● WWW.DREDDVSDEATH.COM

THE WORLD'S BEST FASCIST COPPER MAKES A SEAMLESS TRANSITION TO XBOX

Rebellion loves Judge Dredd. Like, really loves him. Consider its purchase of 2000AD. And we're not talking about nipping down to WHSmith's for the latest copy – we're talking about buying the magazine in a 'we liked it so much, we bought the company' way. Straight up. They're Mega-City mad.

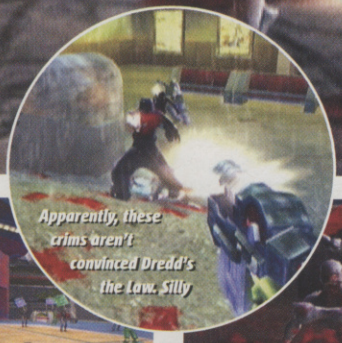
That's commitment to a cherished cult character. That says, 'We're gonna bust our balls on this one.' And true to its word, amid the remains of Rebellion's mangled gonads lies a game that captures Judge Dredd's futuristic hell-hole with real aplomb.

Everything about the look of Mega-City One and its oddball residents screams labour of love. From hearing Joe Public exclaim, 'Drokk!' to huge adverts for Umpty, the addictive candy – it's all here to prove to fans they know Judge Dredd as well as any.

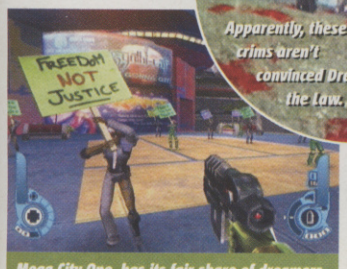
FIRM BUT UTTERLY UNFAIR

The payback for all this slavish devotion is a game that's essentially a showcase for Dredd's heavy-handed, neo-Fascist, bully boy inclinations – which you'll either love or hate. It's about as character-driven as you can get with an FPS, and about as PC as referring to Anne Widdecombe as a fatty midget freakazoid.

Sometimes it's you on your own, other times there's back-up



Apparently, these crims aren't convinced Dredd's the Law. Silly



Mega-City One has its fair share of dreamers. Hmm, not sure if that's an arrestable offence

The vamps have stupidly sharp claws and stinking breath. Yuk! Gerrrofff!

A MONEY-SPINNER

The days of just releasing a game are over. You've got to get pan-media all over a game's ass. You need a novelisation and you need a standalone, one-off graphic novel too.

And that's just what we're getting with Judge Dredd: Dredd Vs Death, plus an exclusive strip running on GAME's website. Check it out on http://shop.game.net.

The graphic novel contains Dredd and Death-dominated stories plus a history of the Dark Judges. Then there's the novel, written by Gordon Rennie, that acts as an accompaniment to the game. Christ on a bike that's a plan...

The Game comic strip is just a small part of Operation Dredd Everywhere

Gordon Rennie, the author, is a veteran Dredd collaborator. Just so you know

Some of the perps are cowardly so fire a burst to make them surrender

Expect a smoother frame-rate with the Xbox multiplayer. But then that's not hard

The Dark Judges have been set free from their Iso-Cubes. And they're not happy

Throughout the story of vampires running amok and Dark Judges going schiz, the blood spews forth at the slightest provocation and seriously harsh sentences are handed out that make a stretch at Camp X-Ray seem like a Butlins holiday. It's you as the meanest hombre that ever walked the 22nd century, hunting your arch-nemesis, Judge Death, and it's authentic as hell.

Having said that, it's no genre-busting messiah in the mould of Metroid Prime or Halo. But it is an accessible shooter that serves up an abundant hot buffet of vampires, Dark Judges and perps – kind of like the way recent James Bond games keep it simple and user-friendly without ever delivering many real 'wow' moments.

There's good, solid gun action to be had, but the thrill behind this game lies in whether you think Judge Dredd is the best comic book character of all time. If you do, then then this is for you because the vibe's spot on. Understand this and you'll be able to overlook the ridiculous deathtrows, erratic AI and the occasional stutter – especially if you've got the spare thumbs to make the most of the great co-op and multiplayer modes.

GAMES VERDICT

A decent shooter slightly dogged by iffy AI and frame-rate issues, but with great visuals and multiplayer options. Judge Dredd is what makes the game rock – fans will love it. **Rich**

- Looks like the comic strip brought to life
- Loads of different gameplay options
- You get to say 'I am the Law' lots

- Enemies can be really stupid
- Levels can sometimes appear devoid of life
- The gameplay's a bit lame

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ James Bond: Nightfire (Xbox) ■ Wolfenstein (Xbox)

GAME INFO

● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: OCTOBER 10
● PUB: CAPCOM ● DEV: CAPCOM ● URL: WWW.CAPCOM.COM

DISNEY'S ALADDIN

The bosses look great and are bloody hard to beat

The rock-hard flying carpet escape is pretty unforgiving

Back in the old days, Capcom's 16-bit adventures based on Disney movies and characters were the slickest, most colourful games around – and now you can relive the joys of Aladdin on your GBA.

Based on the 1993 movie, Aladdin is a side-scrolling action-adventure where the eponymous hero fights soldiers, rides magic carpets and explores brand new bonus stages exclusive to the GBA. The game's as much fun as it always was, and the new levels add variety to a package that's already familiar. But that's as far as it goes – Disney's Aladdin offers nothing ground-breaking or unique. Shame.

- Colourful graphics
- Fast-paced platforming action
- Classic Disney characters

- Difficult flying carpet sequences
- Repetitive enemies
- If you hate Disney, you'll detest this

7 OUT OF TEN

GAME INFO

● COST: £24.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: SEPTEMBER 26
● PUB: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE ● DEV: SPELLBOUND ● URL: WWW.STARSKY-AND-HUTCH.COM

STARSKY & HUTCH

That red arrow tells you where the crim is... Faster!

The game looks great and takes you all over Bay City

Based on the classic Seventies cop series, Starsky & Hutch sees players burning around the mean streets of Bay City, defusing bombs, chasing criminals and looking cool in the iconic 1974 Ford Torino.

As well as a standard story mode that challenges boy racers with task-based missions, various mini games fill out the nostalgia trip. Chase The Ace and Downtown Dash get you to do yet more bombing about in your flash car, adding depth to the basic package. Fun and beautifully presented, Starsky & Hutch is only let down by its fiddly controls that can take hours to master.

- Wide variety of challenges
- Slick 3D graphics
- Loads of cars to drive

- Super-sensitive controls
- Unforgiving challenges
- Cheesy music

7 OUT OF TEN

GAME INFO

● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: NOW
● PUB: TDK MEDIACTIVE ● DEV: SYNETIC ● URL: WWW.TDK-MEDIACTIVE.COM

WORLD RACING

Looks nice, but World Racing is dull as ditch water

Leave the tracks! See the world! Get bored in seconds!

Racing games need to be special to make an impact these days – World Racing doesn't have what it takes.

Although the option to leave the track and explore the lush locations is a welcome innovation, the fact you can't interact with the landscapes or mow down cows means that it's not worth the trouble. The AI of the rival racers is also much too tough, and the promised 100-plus cars are simply variations on a narrow range of Mercedes-Benz motors. Flawed and frustrating, World Racing is only recommended for hardcore Mercedes-Benz nuts.

- Off-road racing
- Huge environments
- Um...

- Poor selection of cars
- Dead landscapes
- Limited number of tracks

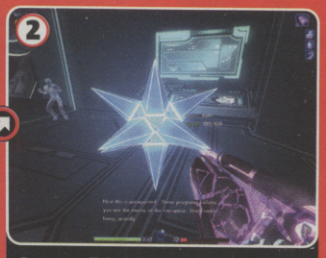
5 OUT OF TEN

SPRITES AND BYTES

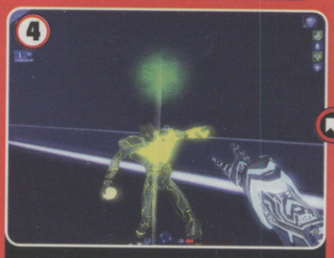
The friends and enemies that you meet in Tron 2.0 represent computer parts in human form. Imagine putting a face (and body) to your hard drive...

System-corrupting viruses are portrayed as poisonous green fanatics who hurl bombs and mutter sinister incantations about 'cleansing the unbelievers'. Helpful programmes such as Mercury are portrayed as softly spoken beatific creatures while your little buddy Byte is a chip with a neat line in techno-quips.

Mercury is voiced by Rebecca Romijn-Stamos who plays Mystique in the X-Men movies. So she sounds as good as she looks

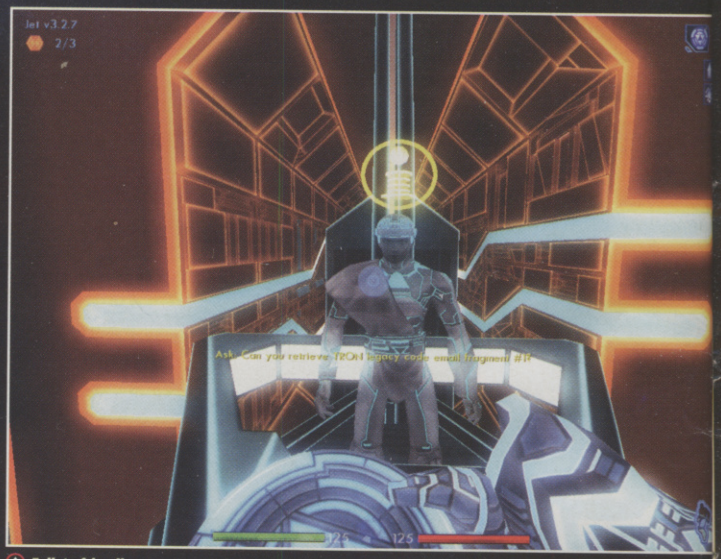


Pompous digital sidekick Byte is a distant relative of the Bit sprite in the original movie. He can be a bit chippy!



The evil z-Lots are fanatical followers of the mysterious leader, Thorne. Fluorescent people are often bad, remember that

Jet's digitised self is a lot more buff than his human form. We reckon he's just padding himself out with digitised socks



Talk to friendly programs and they might help you out. But don't rely on them for fashion tips!

SOFTWARE

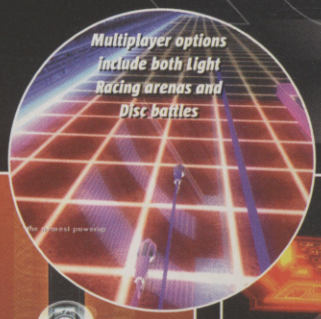
The Subroutines system is a way of upgrading and tinkering with your character's different attributes, abilities and weapons.

You only have a certain amount of memory space available for installing Subroutines so you will find yourself constantly tinkering with your preferred Subroutine set-up as circumstances fluctuate. It's a fiddly business, but very absorbing.

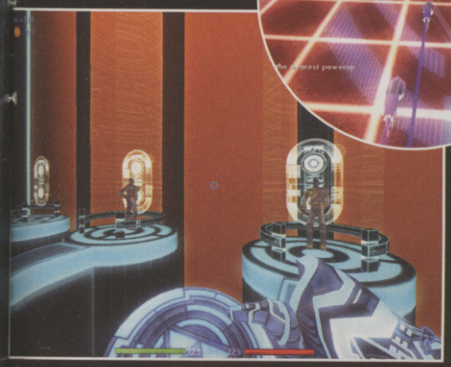
Search Archive Bins for new Defensive, Utility and Combat Subroutines

Just like in real life, Subroutines can be corrupted by viruses in the system

TRON 2.0



This huge puzzle involves using friendly programmes to open a Comms port



The cutscenes show off the gorgeous graphics and strange humour

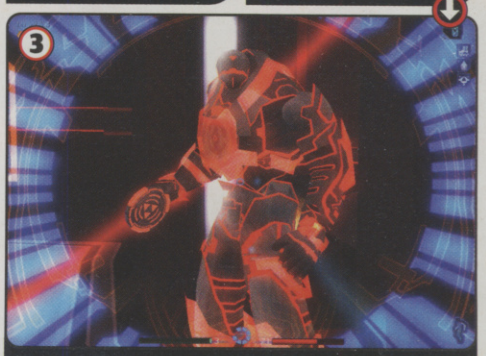
HARDWARE

Some of the weapons in the game are reproductions of those featured in the original film, and some entirely new creations have also been added.

You will also be able to acquire special weapons that are used by enemy programmes in their particular domain.

The Disc is your default weapon - you can upgrade it

Tickling ICP guards with your electrified Rod - cool!



The LOL gun with sniper attachment is pretty damn handy when it comes to picking off the enemy at a distance

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING

COST: £34.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-16 ● OUT: NOW

PUB: BUENA VISTA GAMES ● DEV: MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS ● WWW.ITRON2O.NET

FIND OUT WHAT REALLY LURKS BENEATH YOUR COMPUTER'S BLAND EXTERIOR

Computers have a strange way of totally fragging up your working day. Take poor Jet Bradley, for instance. One minute he's shuffling about his lab thinking about doing a spot of light programming before lunch, the next he's been digitised by a giant laser and transported inside the company computer. Bummer.

WHEN GOOD MACHINES GO BAD...

Tron 2.0 picks up the action 20 years on from the events of the original cult 80s sci-fi film – acclaimed as the first to feature CGI special effects combined with live action and doubtless inspiration for a whole generation of games developers. Jet Bradley, the son of original hero Alan Bradley, is sucked into the mainframe and assimilated into the digital world. There he must try to save his father and stop the spread of a mysterious virus – you know the score. That said, the result is a sophisticated adventure that sizzles with the sort of in-jokes, razor sharp wit and computer geek humour that will keep sci-fi-loving shooter fans fully occupied until the long-awaited release of Deus Ex: Invisible War.

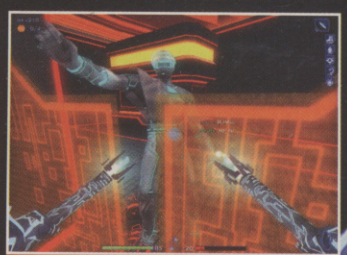
The graphics are breathtaking. NVidia's aptly named 'TRON glow' effect transforms the mundane wires and chips inside the different computer realms into shimmering swathes of vibrant pulsating colour. Each world has a very distinct feel and atmosphere, be it the retro innards of Alan Bradley's ancient PC, or the vast high-tech Server and Power Router interiors. There's no chance of finding yourself wandering endlessly through long, bland corridors in this game.

Tron 2.0 has that vital, indefinable quality that keeps you glued to your PC screen, playing deep into the night and forgetting to eat or drink. It may not have the RPG intricacies of Deus Ex or the chilling horror of System Shock 2, but the gripping gameplay elements and stylish themes will more than satisfy thrill-seeking gamers everywhere.

Platform elements such as jumping across vast gaps can be frustrating when using keyboard controls

The drama of Light Cycle racing is faithfully reproduced from the movie

In-between Light Cycle events, you get to chat up the laydee programs in the locker room



In Tron World, the punishment for underarm odour is a swift prod in the naughty bits

computer and video games VERDICT

Huge levels, compelling storyline, ruthless enemies and superbly smooth control system. There's not much we haven't seen before, but it's still a classy addition to the FPS genre. **Maura**

- ■ Vast worlds and huge missions
- ■ Much more than a regular FPS, with puzzle, platform and RPG elements
- ■ Music verges on the soporific at times
- ■ Lack of a map or radar sometimes makes it hard to find your bearings

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THIS... ■ Star Trek: Elite Force 2 (PC) ■ Deus Ex (PC)

WARHAMMER 40,000: FIREWARRIOR

Grenades and exploding barrels send flaming enemies flying. Bet that hurt

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING

COST: £34.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-8 ● OUT: SEPTEMBER 26 (PS2) OCTOBER 17 (PC)
PUB: THQ ● DEV: KUJU ● WWW.THQ.CO.UK

FUTURISTIC FIRST-PERSON SHOOTING MAKING TABLETOP GAMING COOL

Nerds. Tabletop gaming with little lead figures. The two go together like chicken and fried. Tabletop gaming just isn't cool.

It's a shame because behind the hairy men in faded black T-shirts lie some really cool ideas. The Warhammer 40,000 game is set in the 41st millennium, where legions of hulking space marines are engaged in endless intergalactic battle with orcs and aliens with big, pulsating weapons.

ALIEN RESURRECTION

See, that sounds alright. Firewarrior is based within this world, but don't expect a smooth introduction. You're dropped right into a raging battle and the action never lets up. You play Kais, a young soldier fresh from recruitment, and must guide him through the trials of warfare to earn the elite status of Firewarrior.

The hook is that you're actually an alien, and spend most of the game blowing the heads off humans. It might make you feel a bit treacherous, but it also makes you feel *good*.

Firewarrior really benefits from the Warhammer universe. It's highly stylised, and if the character models and environments look great it's because they're the end result of years of design. It also helps to prevent the formula going stale – when you find yourself battling on the exposed deck of an enemy starship that looks more like a huge gothic cathedral you feel like you're seeing something fresh.

But it's not all style over substance. The action never stops, there are mercifully few puzzles and exploration segments, and although the targeting system feels a little loose to start with, you soon get used to it. Firefights become intense stand-offs with bullets and plasma bolts whizzing past you and your enemies' heads.

Nerds rejoice! Firewarrior is so good it might even make tabletop gaming cool.

There are lots of corridors, but the relentless action keeps the pace up wherever you are

Fellow Firewarriors provide cover and thankfully act as more than cannon fodder

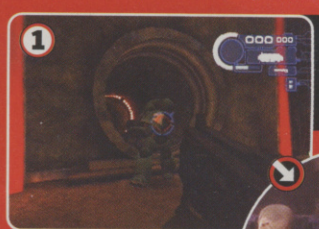
Weapons range from futuristic technology like plasma to good old-fashioned bullets

Firewarrior might not look all that original, but it does look impressive

IN SPACE, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU POO YOUR PANTS

The hardest, most badass bruisers in the Warhammer universe are the Colonial Space Marines.

When you come up against one of these armour-clad behemoths you'll soil your spacesuit, guaranteed. Unless you're already dead – they don't waste any time.



Mean, green, and not especially lean – more like massive and packing serious heat

But they're not just bloodthirsty killing machines. This bloke did well at the Space Marine gymkhana

The real daddies are the Chaos Space Marines – all the power with added evil

Getting into a prison is evidently just as difficult as escaping from one

computer and video games VERDICT

Solid first-person shooting with the emphasis on blasting people to bits, Firewarrior makes fantastic use of a good licence and manages to set itself apart from the troops. **Graeme**

- Really feels like futuristic warfare
- Brilliant enemies and weapons
- Good plot with loads of twists

- Not hugely original
- Vanishing bodies and scripted events

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ TimeSplitters 2 (PS2) ■ Halo (Xbox)

SPLASHDOWN 2 Rides Gone Wild

RACING JET SKIS – WATERWAY TO SPEND AN AFTERNOON

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £19.99 | PLAYERS: 1-2 | OUT: NOW | PUB: THQ | DEV: RAINBOW STUDIOS | WWW.THQ.CO.UK

Who needs a holiday when you can go to the beach on your PS2?

Snow way he'll land that trick on the Arctic track...

The thing about extreme sports is that they're really niche. I mean, who goes jetski racing?

Maybe that's why they attracts the sort of radical wetsuit-clad dudes that populate Splashdown 2. While the original took a more serious approach, the sequel is about as restrained as a fat kid doing a belly flop from really high up.

Dino Dominion takes you through a malfunctioning Jurassic Park

The track design is often more exciting than the race – check out the crazy UFO!

THESE PEOPLE ARE CRAZY!

Being a bit 'extreme', the visuals are fun and dripping with colour. The level design is particularly wet and wild, with all sorts of mental stuff in the background like scaly dinosaurs snapping at your backwash. Glaciers crumble or pirate ships explode on every lap, keeping things interesting if not slightly surreal.

It's a pity then that the racing itself is so dull. The jet skis don't react to the water well, skimming across the surface rather than cutting and weaving through the waves. It's more like ice skating than anything else. There's a trick system that gives you speed boosts for sweet jet ski acrobatics, but you can get the same results just by hammering the Dpad.

Rides Gone Wild looks pretty cool, but it doesn't back any of it up with an enjoyable play experience. There isn't enough variety and it just isn't as much fun to play as something like Rainbow's ATV Offroad Fury 2. Not totally sunk then, but it is, unfortunately, a bit of damp sponge.

computer and video games VERDICT

Looks great and the characters are loud and likeable, but the fun dribbles out like you're squeezing water from a rag. Makes more of a ripple than a splash. **Graeme**

- Funky cast of characters
- Tricks equal speed
- Rocking punky tunes

- Dull handling
- Too slow to be exciting

6 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Splashdown (PS2) | Wave Race (GC)

Hard? Yup, that's true enough. Good-looking? Sure. Weird as a bucket of anchovies? Yes siree!

OK so it's a bit of metal on a rope, but the grappling hook is a hard device to master

If you beat the bosses with an 'S' or an 'A' rating, you can steal some of their special moves

MEGAMAN ZERO 2

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £29.99 | PLAYERS: 1-2 | OUT: OCTOBER 17 | PUB: CAPCOM | DEV: CAPCOM | WWW.CAPCOM.COM

THE GBA'S HARDEST GAME IS HERE

Don't listen to what your brother says about games being too easy these days. Just let him loose on Megaman Zero 2 for ten minutes and giggle as the veins start popping on his forehead in frustration.

Anyone familiar with Megaman will already know how brutally difficult the games are, but while this is sure to send casual gamers fleeing for their sanity, fans of the action-packed series will go ape for this latest edition – particularly as it offers unlimited continues.

WHAT'S NEW?

The biggest change is a two-player, link-up mode that allows gamers to battle each other in action stages, race to collect items or try to escape specially designed levels. The new EX Skills also allow players to adopt the moves of the bosses they've defeated, and there's also an expanded roster of Cyber Elves who'll help you tackle enemies using their unique powers.

The game is still somewhat flawed with perilous leaps of faith, a clumsy system for changing weapons and a level of difficulty that will alienate all but the most hardcore gamers, but the solid gameplay, beautifully designed graphics and frantic music are enough to keep Megaman fans glued like limpets to their portable pal.

computer and video games VERDICT

If you like Megaman games you'll be totally addicted to this. It's beautiful to look at too, but casual players will still be frustrated by its brutal difficulty. **Dave**

- Compelling action
- Lush 2D graphics
- Brilliant bosses

- Too... damned... hard!
- Very similar to previous edition
- Switching weapons is a bit tricky

8 OUT OF TEN

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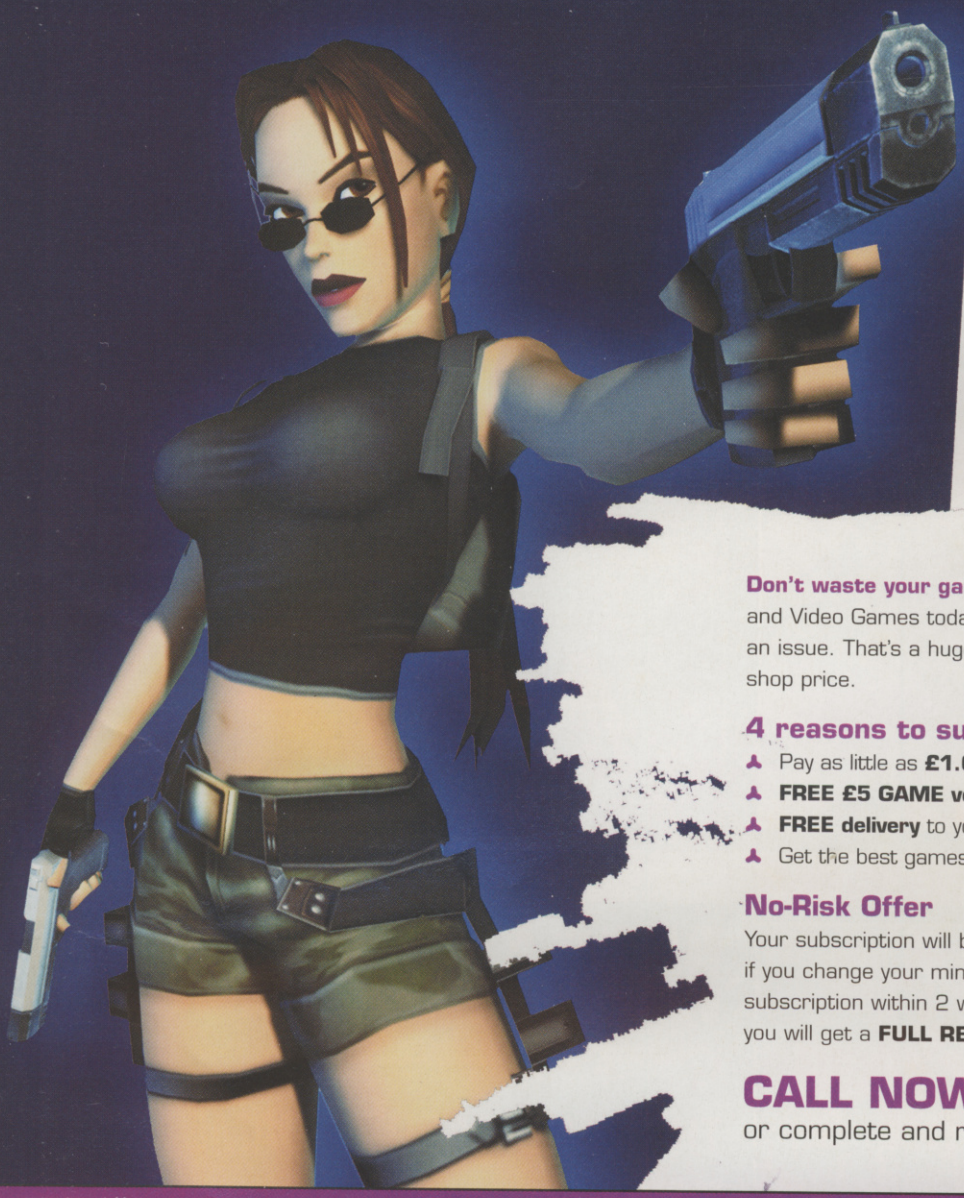

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computer and video GAMES

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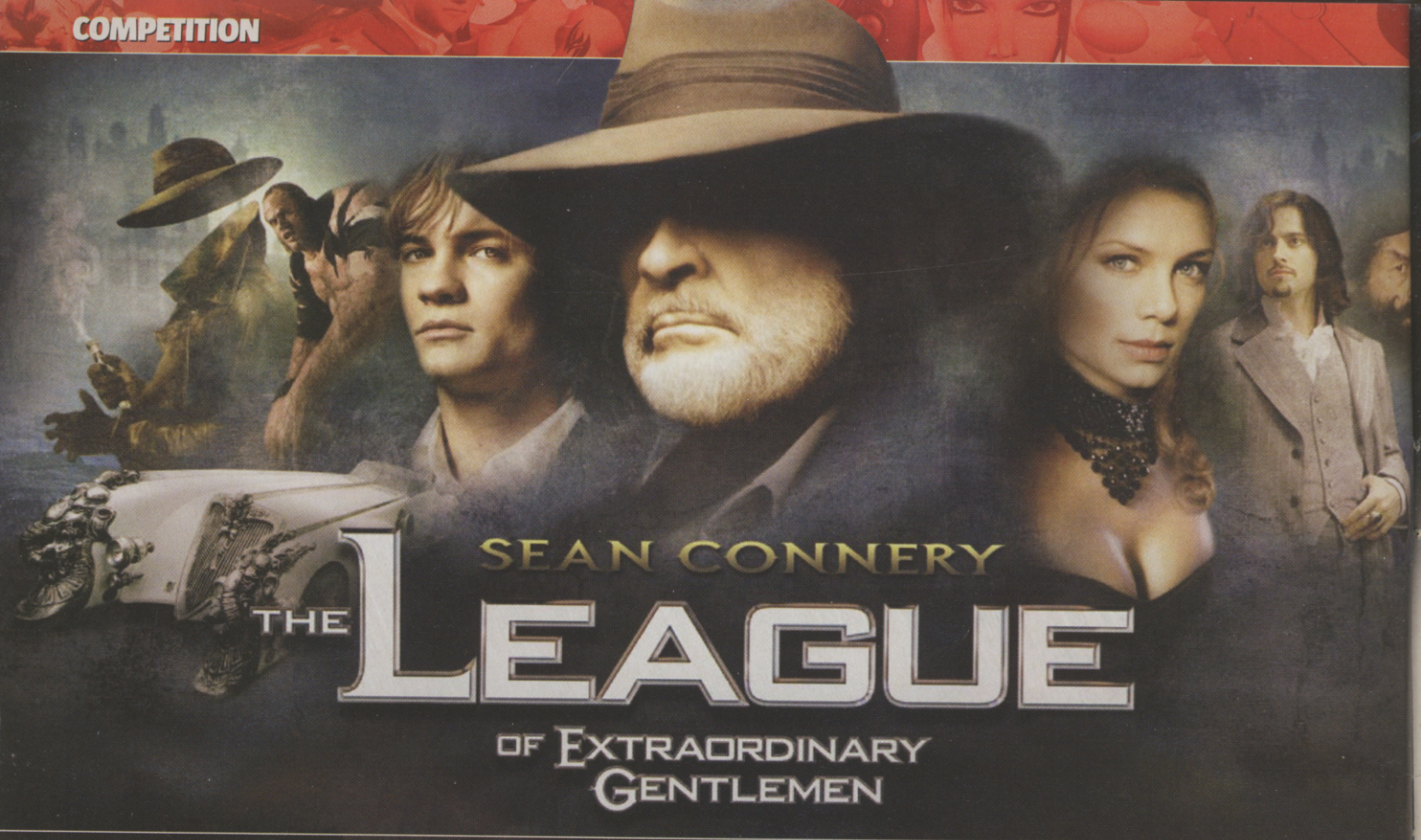

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Seven heroes are better than one, right? And to prove it, Sean Connery heads up a cast of extraordinary superheroes in the forthcoming balls-out blockbuster The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen. The movie's rated 12A and is out in theatres October 17. But why queue up with the rest of the rabble to see it when you can enter our competition for the chance to win a private screening for yourself and 50 mates?

All you have to do is answer the question below and send off the coupon. If you're not the lucky beggar to win, it's not necessarily game over – you could still bag yourself one of five runners-up LXG goodie bags, including a swanky T-shirt, mini pocket compass and digital world time clock. Gentlemanly!

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Adventurer Allan Quatermain leads a league of extraordinary superheroes including Captain Nemo, Dracula vampiress Mina Harker, invisible man Rodney Skinner, American secret service agent Tom Sawyer, immortal pretty boy Dorian Gray and split-personality scientist Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde.

The League members are each defiantly individual, with unique gifts and powers that have proved both a blessing and curse. They must learn to trust each other and work as a team for the hope of civilisation. The League Of Extraordinary Gentleman has just nine hours to save the world from the deadly Fantom...

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QUESTION: Salty seaman Captain Nemo appears in which underwater literary and cinematic classic?

A: 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea
B: The Water Babies
C: Jaws

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A: 20,000 LEAGUES...

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CVG GRAND PRIX

THREE CONSOLES. THREE BLISTERING NEW RACERS. IT'LL BE THE RIDE OF THEIR LIVES BUT WHO'S IN POLE POSITION?

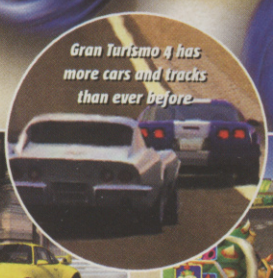
The revs are high. Exhausts are spitting. All three consoles are lining up their sexy new driving games in a wheel-to-wheel drag race – Gran Turismo 4 from Polyphony Digital, Bizarre Creations' Project Gotham Racing 2 and Mario Kart: Double Dash!! from Nintendo.

So far, we've had to satisfy ourselves with tantalising glimpses of concept models packed with the very latest in technology and growling with power, brief fumblings in darkened corners of trade shows or snatched quickies during secretive demo days.

Now we've gone all the way with all three, taking them down to the CVG Speedway and putting them through their paces with some of our finest test drivers. We even canvassed regular gamers' opinions at public hands-on sessions to bring you the most comprehensive run-down on the greatest race in the history of videogames.

The stakes don't come any higher – they're crucial releases for Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo, and the winner of this race will in no small way help decide the outcome of the console wars. They're on the grid, the engines are hot, the lights turn green and it's GO! GO! GO!

Race sports cars in real cities with Project Gotham 2



Gran Turismo 4 has more cars and tracks than ever before

Double Dash!! Worthy of two exclamation marks?

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
OUT: NOVEMBER 14
ONLINE GAMING
x8
WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM

MARIO KART Double Dash!!

GO!

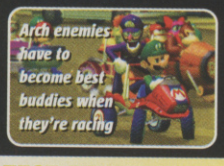
Chips. Just potato, cut up and fried, but so *good*. Sometimes the simplest things in life are the best – like Mario Kart. Pure racing fun with no photo-realistic graphics, no licensed car models, and no physics engines calculated by dandruff-flecked brainboxes. Just fun.

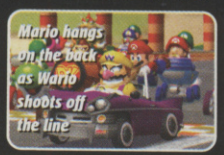
Ah, Mario Kart. The merest mention of it gets us all misty-eyed and nostalgic for those countless hours spent lobbing red shells at each other. We're more excited about Double Dash!! than a fat kid in a pie factory – and here are the reasons why!

CARS

Each of the characters has branded their vehicle with their own personality, so Mario drives a bouncy red quad, Donkey Kong has a mental wooden buggy, and Wario has a big purple convertible spewing noxious fumes. And if you get bored of your character's motor, just hop into another, because you can choose your kart too!

Another big difference is that you can now choose two characters from a choice of 16 for your kart. Once you're racing, one character drives while the other takes care of chucking stuff at your opponents. It's cool seeing Mario and Luigi in the same kart, but if you really want to stir things up why not put Bowser and Mario together?


Arch enemies have to become best buddies when they're racing


Mario hangs on the back as Wario shoots off the line

I'd have a banana, but the idea doesn't really a-peel to me

Double Dash!! has the feel of the original but with a lot more choice

83 km/h

TEST DRIVE

LOREN WEDDERBURN, 17

"The karts are cool because each of them are tweaked to a character's individual style. It's a nice novelty and makes a change from driving the same dull cars all the time."

»

PUBLISHER: SONY
DEVELOPER: POLYPHONY DIGITAL INC.
OUT: WINTER 2003
ONLINE GAMING
x6
WWW.SCEE.COM

GRAN TURISMO 4
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

GO!

You slam your foot on the accelerator and the engine roars in compliant rage. The corner looms out of the parched heat haze and you hit hard on the brakes, fighting with the steering wheel. The rear end kicks out, spraying dust into the deep chasm of the Grand Canyon. Then full throttle, exhaust yelling fury as the tyres squeal burning rubber and a big smile spreads across your face.

Welcome to the world of GT4, where everything depends on the split seconds between braking and accelerating. The Gran Turismo series historically held pole position on the racing game grid, but is the lead growing or shrinking?

HANDLING

In Gran Turismo, realism is the key to success. It's all about the experience, the exhilarating feeling of coaxing your favourite car perfectly round a hairpin bend and slamming on the gas.

The handling in GT3 was so good it seems unbelievable that they could improve it – but they have. The cars feel much heavier and react to the road surface much more realistically. Balancing acceleration and braking is more important than ever, since every slight change in the mechanics of your car will have an effect.

Fancy a Subaru? Suits you!

Customised street cars feature heavily

Cars handle like their real-life versions

Take Colin McRae's Subaru for a spin!

TEST DRIVE

SETAREH ERFAN, 17

"The controls are perfect. Every little variation in pressure produces exactly the result you want. I don't drive in real life but what's the point when this is so good?"

»

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
DEVELOPER: BIZARRE CREATIONS
OUT: AUTUMN
ONLINE GAMING
x8
WWW.BIZARRECREATIONS.COM

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

GO!

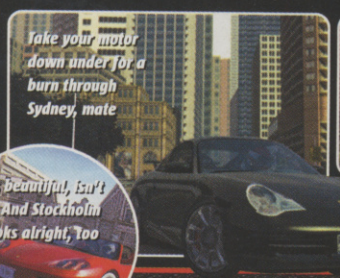
If Gran Turismo 3 is a refined cruise in a chauffeur-driven limousine, Project Gotham Racing is a joyride in a boy racer's turbo-charged hot hatch. In Gotham, coming first wasn't the only thing you had to worry about – you needed to look good doing it.

With over 100 officially licensed cars, photo-accurate and geographically precise cities to race around, and some of the most exciting online options we've ever seen – PGR2 is screaming off the racing grid like a flame red Ferrari Enzo stuffed full of nitrous oxide.

TRACKS

PGR2 is keeping it real. Knowing that the street-racing theme is of paramount importance to the game, developer Bizarre embarked on a quest to accurately model the streets of international cities for you to race around. For each city the team took almost 6000 photographs and 18 hours of video footage. The results are astonishing.

The cities include Chicago, Florence, Barcelona, Tokyo and even Edinburgh. They look so perfect you can recognise shop fronts and pick out hotel rooms you might have stayed in. Even all the street furniture is accurately mapped, so a lamppost will be exactly where it is in real life, making for a truly awesome driving experience.


Take your motor down under for a burn through Sydney, mate

Scream through Yokohama's neon-streaked streets

Race custom sports cars in the shadow of the train lines and skyscrapers of Chicago

It's beautiful, isn't it? And Stockholm looks alright, too

»

HANDLING

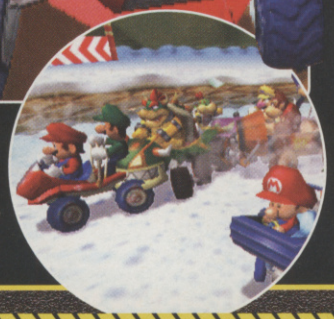
Out on the track it's clear that Mario Kart: Double Dash!! ignores the mundane aspects of racing and goes for all-out fun.

The handling is twitchy but easy to get used to. At first you'll be skidding around like a puppy on tiles, but soon you'll be powersliding round bends with show-off sparks bursting from your wheels. It's quick, no-hanging-about fun with the emphasis firmly on keeping the excitement levels up!

Now that's a powerslide – watch the sparks fly!

Mario slithers into position for Luigi to wang his shell into a competitor's kart

Pile-ups are common on the corners – make sure you avoid them if you really want to win



The soft desert sand makes it difficult to keep your traction...

And snow doesn't really help either. Big skids ahoy!

TEST DRIVE

CVG'S GRAEME BOYD, 23

"The handling's really loose so it's a lot of fun skidding around corners. It's not very realistic, but it is a great laugh and feels just as good as previous Mario Kart games."

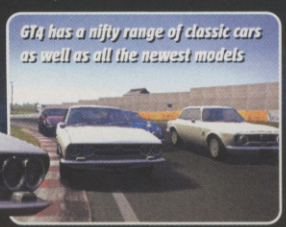
CARS

Gran Turismo has always been the true automotive fan's game of choice. Previous car lists have read like a boy racer's Christmas list, with more Subaru Imprezas and Mitsubishi Lancer Evolutions than down your local McDonald's car park on a Saturday night.

Not only has the list grown to over 500 cars for GT4, it's also diversified. Nestling alongside the Japanese pocket rockets you'll now find an extensive range of refined classic cars, some shockingly powerful American muscle cars, and the usual selection of top-of-the-range bonus models unlocked by winning races. With such a huge list it's guaranteed that you'll be able to track down your favourite motor.

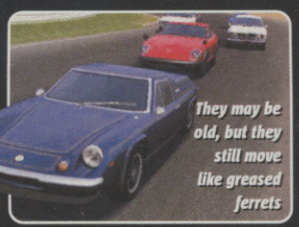
Sony has also promised car specifications that accurately reflect the real thing. To show off how well they'd done they compared real-life lap times with those in the game, and the difference was tiny. Who needs dreams when GT4 is so close to the real thing?

It might not look much to you, but your dad's going to go mental

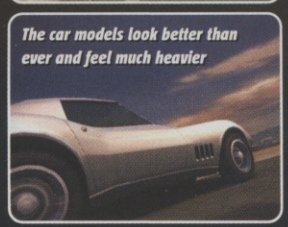


GT4 has a nifty range of classic cars as well as all the newest models

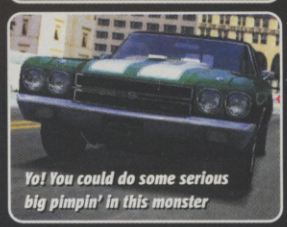
For the first time there's a great selection of American muscle cars



They may be old, but they still move like greased ferrets



The car models look better than ever and feel much heavier



Yo! You could do some serious big pimpin' in this monster

We're all for respecting classic automobiles, but that's just mingin'

TEST DRIVE

GRAEME BOYD, 23

"Driving your favourite car is the coolest thing about GT3, but GT4 leaves it for dust. Not only are there more cars, but they look even better, handling like the real thing!"

'GREEN HELL'

So you've mastered every track a racing game can throw at you? PGR2's got a little something for ya. Or rather, 13 miles of unforgiving tarmac that Jackie Stewart, one of the greatest race drivers ever, named 'Green Hell'.

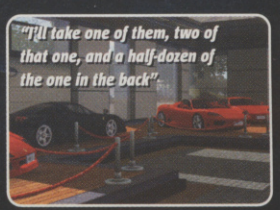
This is the fearsome Nurburgring Nordschleife and trust us, if you manage to emerge from the tree-covered maze in anything even *close* to the seven-minute lap record you'll be doing very well indeed. Don't say we haven't warned you.

Just you, the open road, and 600 horses throbbing under the bonnet

CARS

The original Project Gotham had 29 cars – PGR2 has 103. And we're not talking the kind of car you borrow off your mum – we're talking full-throttle, thoroughbred, tarmac-chewing monsters. From custom cars to project models, PGR2 has got the lot.

The motors are split into eight categories ranging from souped-up Renault Clios in the Compact class, to the work of automotive art that is the Ferrari Enzo in the Ultimate class. You can unlock the car of your dreams by earning enough kudos and then roaring down to the showroom to drool on the paintwork. Can't decide if you want to splash out on a million pound motor? Then take it for a test drive on the track!



"I'll take one of them, two of that one, and a half-dozen of the one in the back"

Take it out on the track, abuse it, then tell them you don't fancy it!

TEST DRIVE

CVG'S JOHNNY MINKLEY, 24

"This is awesome. A real rush. It's so cool driving at full throttle round real cities in the world's most beautiful cars. I'll take PGR2's 800bhp supercars any day!"

TRACKS

The Mario Kart games have always captured Mario's world well and in Double Dash!! it looks better than ever! Old favourites like Mario Raceway and the traffic choked Turnpike are all here, as well as some crazy new additions. On one track you drive up a tunnel only to get shot out of a massive cannon then land on the peak of an angry volcano, before racing all the way down avoiding rockslides and endless drops.

But it doesn't just look cool. Even more obstacles and jumps have been added to tracks to make races more exciting and frantic. For the first time F-Zero style boosts have been added to give you an extra burst of speed. But be careful – with even more obstacles on the track you have to be ready for anything!

And there's lots of opportunities for you to take a sneaky shortcut, since the tracks are riddled with them. If you know where to look, of course...

TEST DRIVE

ROBERT PRITCHARD, 17

"The variety of tracks is superb! Some are simple but on others there's loads to think about. It can be confusing, but once you settle in, all the extra detail is excellent."

You'll need to watch out for Sunday drivers as well as your opponents

Line up the jumps properly or crash out

That's not a tunnel – it's a bleedin' cannon!

TRACKS

Just like the cars, the tracks in GT4 are as close to the real things as you could imagine. There are over 100 different tracks, ranging from perfectly modelled city centre streets to a rally track perched on the edge of the Grand Canyon. And if looking at the last GT was like casting your eyes over the beautiful curves of a Porsche, GT4 is taking that Porsche, dipping it in gold and encrusting it with diamonds. Have a gander at the screenshots – can PS2 games look any better? We doubt it.

So, great, they look nice, but how do they race? Well, imagine gunning a vintage Mustang through Times Square in New York at 150 mph, or screaming through the tight, cobbled streets of an Italian village in a Ferrari. It feels as good as it sounds. Not only does GT4 shift faster than a fly on Red Bull, but it completely immerses the player in its vivid blend of racing reality.

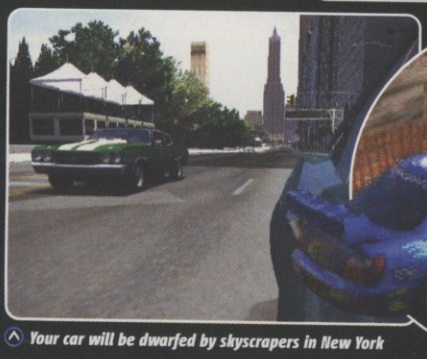
The Stars and Stripes flutters as you race down Park Avenue, NY

The Grand Canyon track perfectly captures the atmosphere of the place

TEST DRIVE

HARKARAN GILL, 15

"More cars, more tracks, more realistic – it's much better than the last one! Driving through narrow streets at top speed made me feel just like Steve McQueen in Bullitt!"



Your car will be dwarfed by skyscrapers in New York

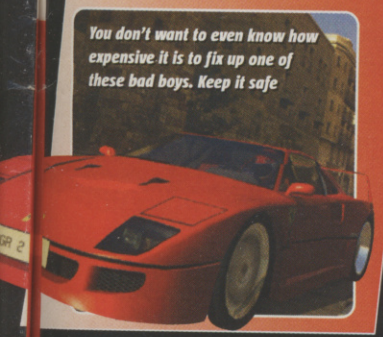
The famous lens-flare effect is back and looking better than ever

Better hope that orange netting is strong enough to keep you on the road

BRING YOUR INSURANCE

You might want to brake a little bit harder going into the corners in PGR2. The cars here don't make excuses for any dodgy driving.

Bonnets crumple and come loose, headlights burst and spoilers collapse. It doesn't affect handling, but the sight of a mangled Porsche is enough to bring a tear to anyone's eye. So drive carefully, you hear?



You don't want to even know how expensive it is to fix up one of these bad boys. Keep it safe

ONLINE

In the online stakes PGR2 is as innovative as a concept car. The standard options are all screwed firmly into place, so you can race with seven other drivers over Live or System Link, using the headset to exercise your road rage muscle. The developer has been clever enough to incorporate a cheat disable, meaning that idiot who keeps driving round the track backwards will be ghosted so he can't foul up your racing line.

Even better, if you are connected to Live, your statistics, and every other player's in the world, are constantly updated and ranked in a series of leaderboards. Just put in a blistering lap on your favourite course? You'll instantly be able to see how you match up to everyone else. On top of that you can check out how other players achieved their laptimes by watching their ghosts, and you can even race against them! We're certain it's going to create the most exciting and competitive racing game experience ever!

PGR2's online play will change racing games forever. It's that good

Go head-to-head for the ultimate racing showdown

Bumper-to-bumper through the streets of Edinburgh

Set the world record on your fave course, then boast

Different classes can race together, with less powerful cars rewarded more

WEAPONS

One of the coolest things about Mario Kart has always been the weapon system. Even if you're in last place and trailing the pack, one pick-up can turn your race around.

There are six standard weapons like the homing red shell and the awesome lightning bolt, but on top of that each character has an individual special weapon like Luigi's fireballs or Bowser's famous spiky shells! It really adds a tactical dimension to the racing since you have to decide who to put in charge of your weapons as well as when to use them on your opponents.

"Hey-a you-a! You want-a one of my fireballs, yes?"

Yoshi's kart is a green monstrosity

As if the shell wasn't big enough already, he's gone and put spikes on it!

TEST DRIVE

THOMAS PEDALINO, 17

"The new weapons make it more frantic than ever – one second you're in first and the next you could be in last! The magic of Mario Kart is still there!"

PETROL-HEAD RATING

So you don't know your ass from your LSD (that's Limited Slip Differential)? Don't worry, you can always learn. If a petrol-head had a wet dream and woke up to find their sheets covered in motor oil, GT4 would be responsible – in the nicest way possible way, of course.

There's over 500 cars, from classics to the cutting edge of automotive engineering. And with the opportunity to soup them up and trick them out with turbos, alloy wheels and new paint jobs, GT4 will be the most complete and in-depth racing game ever. Okay, so you might find tweaking your carburettor about as exciting as long division, but it's like taking out the gherkins from your burger – not much fun while you're doing it, but you're glad you did.

Fix springy shocks and racing suspension to keep the landing soft

As usual you'll be able to fit custom alloy wheels and racing tyres

We're expecting extensive new tuning options and hardware

Tuning your motor can make the difference between first and last place

ENGINE NOTES

Real race drivers rely on the different sounds their car makes to judge laps, so PGR2 feeds you enough sonic information to let you do the same.

Each wheel has a different soundtrack, as do the separate components of the engine. It sounds amazing and all of the motors were sampled so the sound is as realistic as possible. Cars this expensive come with a radio too, and you can listen to three licensed DJs from each city playing over 250 licensed songs.

You can't hear it, but it's going "NEeaaow REEEEee GRRRRRR!"

The sound surrounds you, even on a stereo TV, giving instant feedback

You can rip your own CDs onto the hard drive and the DJ will play them while you race around

MARIO KART Double Dash!!

ONLINE

Double Dash!! isn't going to be online-compatible – that would be the end of civilisation since everyone would be playing it.

It's not all bad news, though. Using a LAN connection you can link two GameCubes for eight-player madness. Just imagine how much fun it'd be racing against seven mates! And of course, the battle mode that made the first two games so much fun makes a glorious return along with new modes like the Bob-omb battle where you chuck bombs at each other.

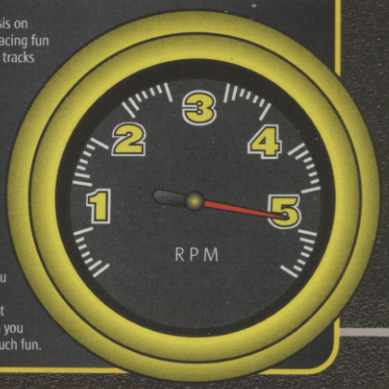
We've wasted so much of our lives playing multiplayer Mario Kart, but it was fun

Double Dash!! can be eight times as much fun, if you've got enough mates

Walloping your mates with a shell is oh so sweet – battle mode rules!

Trust us – it's going to swallow up a whole lot of your time...

REV-O-METER



With its emphasis on unadulterated racing fun and its cars and tracks free from the wheelclamps of realism, Mario Kart: Double Dash!! is more refreshing than an ice cube down your pants, with multiplayer mode the icing on the cake. It might not let you drive the car of your dreams, but who cares when you can have this much fun.

FINISH

GRAN TURISMO 4
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

ONLINE

Probably the only thing that has held the Gran Turismo series back has been the computer-controlled opponents' dodgy AI. Lap after lap, race after race, they would dumbly stick to the same racing line.

Sony has promised to sort this out in the single-player mode, but why not bypass the problem altogether and race your mates! With online support for six people to race, and the opportunity for them to chat, GT4 could be the start of a whole new car culture lived at full throttle through the phone lines.

TEST DRIVE
ABDUL ALSAIEGH, 13

"All the extra features make GT4 totally worthwhile, and playing online will be excellent! I can't wait to challenge my friends and show them who's best!"

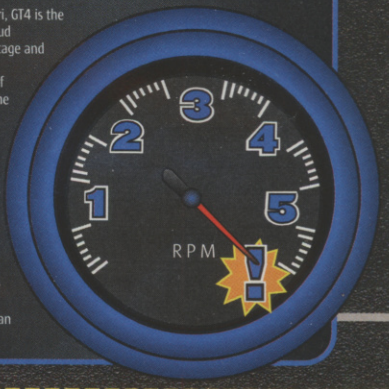
Imagine how exciting it'll be racing GT4 online

Online head-to-head deathmatches ahoy!

TEST DRIVE
MOHAMMED SADOON, 13

"It's going to sell much more now it's online and playing against other people will be far more challenging. I'll be practising loads – I don't want to embarrass myself!"

REV-O-METER



Like a new Ferrari, GT4 is the product of a proud automotive heritage and an exquisite understanding of the motor car. The new additions will satisfy even the most hardcore petrol-head, and it's so realistic it should come bundled with leather-palmed driving gloves. The choice of the connoisseur and more realistic than ever before!

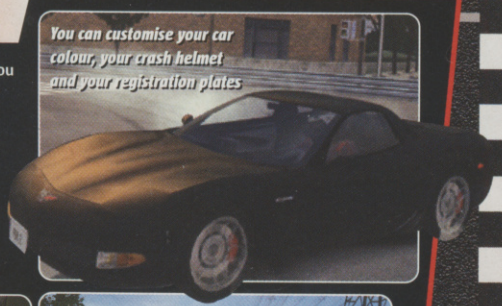
FINISH

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

PETROL-HEAD RATING

Project Gotham 2 might be about cars, but you don't need to be an engine-head with high-octane fuel running through your veins to understand it.

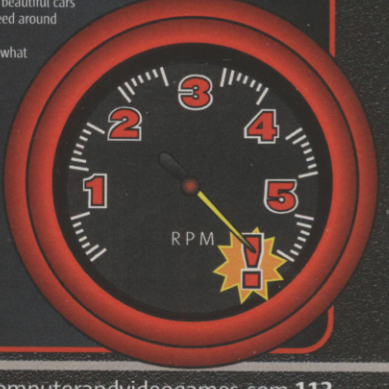
While the cars all behave and handle like their real-life counterparts, PGR2 is about accessibility and fun rather than tinkering with a valve to squeeze out an extra ounce of torque. The result is a petrol tank overflowing with five-star adrenalin and no need for pitstops to fill it up.


You can customise your car colour, your crash helmet and your registration plates

The environmental and weather effects are as beautiful as the cars. Just take a look at that

There's plenty to keep boy racers happy, like this mint Supra, for example

REV-O-METER



The world's most beautiful cars driving at top speed around the world's most beautiful cities – what more could you possibly want? Add in a whole host of revolutionary online options and PGR2 could be the racing game we've always dreamed of. Gran Turismo better check its rear view mirror, because PGR2 is coming up fast!

FINISH

CACKMAN'S THOUGHT OF THE MONTH Good to see Crystal Dynamics are on the Tomb Raider case. They certainly proved their credentials with their three amazing Mario-beating Gex games.

CACKMAN©

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE FREE GAMING NATION

THE TEN WORST

CONSOLE NAMES EVER

It's not hard is it? As long as you use words like Super, Mega or Ninja, you can't fail.

That's why Cackman despairs as we count down this parade of disgusting naming ineptitude. If you actually liked any of these, you're banned from gaming forever. Drop the joypad and sod off. Go on!

10 SEGA 'GENESIS'
The American name for the Mega Drive. Only looks like Phil Collins if you'd squashed him down and set him on fire until burnt black.
■ **Better name: Sega Mega Drive (obviously)**

9 ATARI 'JAGUAR'
Looked less like a deadly wild cat or sleek sports car, and more like a hard-baked cowpat. And the joypad looked like a retarded mobile phone. Bad.
■ **Better name: Atari No-It's-Not-Even-Worth-It-For-Tempest 2000**

8 NINTENDO 'VIRTUAL BOY'
There was nothing 'virtual' about it. It existed. It was an *Actual* Boy. And it was actually rubbish. Never released in Europe because it blinded people.
■ **Better name: Nintendo VR Error**

7 SEGA 'DREAMCAST'
Was Sega's 'dream' to have the shortest lived major console ever that nobody besides themselves had any interest in developing for? Somehow Cackman doubts it.
■ **Better name: Sega Still Waiting For The PS2 Dev Kit-o-Tron**

6 SNK 'NEO GEO'
Translated it means 'new world'. Cackman assumes that this is because at £200 each, the games cost *the earth*. It was cheaper to buy the actual arcade versions...
■ **Better name: SNK Hardcore Idiot Impresser**

5 NINTENDO 'GAMECUBE'
So it's vaguely like a Cube and it plays games? Is that the best they could do? How about Nintendo Super Death Ninja? And where are the games, by the way?
■ **Better name: Nintendo 64 Part 2**

4 ATARI 'LYNX'
Cackman rolled it under his arms, but still stunk as bad as ever. And girls didn't dance like in the advert. Cackman likes to party. Everybody does.
■ **Better name: Atari Craneheld**

3 NINTENDO 'GAME BOY'
It's clearly not a boy. Boys have a penis. It has a slot of sorts, so in actual fact is a Game Girl. No, that doesn't mean you can [redacted]. Pervert.
■ **Better name: Nintendo Last Good Idea (which they've milked to death)**

2 COMMODORE 'AMIGA'
'Amiga' is Spanish for 'girlfriend' – something Amiga owners never had then or have had since. Disgusting, hairy-backed losers.
■ **Better name: Commodore (Spanish for 'hairy palms')**

1 MICROSOFT 'XBOX'
The king of crap names. It means nothing. Except in Japan where selling about four consoles a week makes it an Ex-Box.
Better name: anything

STUPIDEST MOMENTS IN GAMING 1
THAT HUUGE XBOX PAD
When it comes to making joypads, there is only one golden rule...
Human beings don't have really giant hands like some freaky, planet-crushing space monster. Another law that Microsoft stupidly assumed didn't apply to them. Unless their pad engineer is some kind of fat-handed freak.

STUPIDEST MOMENTS IN GAMING 2
GIVING MARIO A VOICE
In 2D, it didn't matter that Mario couldn't talk. He wasn't a public orator, he was a little dude who jumped on turtles. Then Charles Martinet came along in his hilariously rubbish Hawaiian shirt, squealing like the most annoying kid in a special secure institute for the world's most annoying kids. Nintendo, shut that fanny up! NOW!

WHAT CORE DO NOW

Cackman can't figure out games companies. Core delivered a Tomb Raider just as crap as the old ones, and overshot the lucrative Christmas sales market by, ooh, only seven months or so. And Eidos sacked them? WHY FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE? Here's what they do now...

1. TOMB RAIDER: HOT DOG STAND
Made from bits of vicious dogs that Lara killed. They're cheap, but if you want mustard you have to push a massive stone and then look behind some bushes at the other end of the park.

2. TOMB RAIDER: TAILORING
Suits are made unusually tight, so as to grip you like a full-body corset. Makes it difficult to run straight, and you end up banging into walls all the time. Any sort of rapid evasive action is impossible.

3. TOMB RAIDER: SWIMMING INSTRUCTORS
They make it pointlessly difficult to dive in instead of just falling pathetically, and then you end up drowning because the perspective shifts constantly so up is suddenly down. And there are sharks in the water.

WRITE TO CACKMAN

You lot must have ideas. Questions. Theories. Write to Cackman at the usual address, and the best will win an awesome prize! Senders of anything Cackman considers to be crap will be subjected to GBH in text form on this very page. Come on! You want to be famous, don't you? What else have you got to live for in your stupid little lives?

Cackman's opinions aren't necessarily those of CVG

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BABY BOY - beyonce/sean paul	112933	LIFE GOT COLD - girls aloud	112854	GOING UNDER - evanescence	112968
RIGHT THURR - chingy	112868	RUBBERNECKIN - elvis presley	112864	THOIA THONG - r kelly	112948
PRETTY GREEN EYES - ultra beat	112877	CHIHUAHUA - dj bobo	112905	SWEET DREAMS - rachel stevens	112949
CRAZY IN LOVE - beyonce knowles	112707	FIX UP LOOK SHARP - dizzee rascal	112937	THESE DAYS - alien ant farm	112907
GHETTO MUSIC - outkast	112981	SUNSHINE - gareth gates	112906	SOMEDAY - nickelback	112967
LIKE GLUE - sean paul	112785	DANCE - lemar	112934	BROKEN SILENCE - so solid crew	112969
BABY BOY - big brovaz	112859	I BELIEVE IN A THING.. - darkness	112972	YEAH WHATEVER - westlife	112976
SENORITA - justin timberlake	112732	I CANT LET YOU GO - ian van dahl	112918	SHOW ME A SIGN - kontakt	112979
CAN'T HOLD US D.. - c.aguilera/l.kim	112860	HERE COMES THE SUN.. - love inc	112870	AMERICAN IN AMSTER.. - wheatus	112962
SHAKE YA TAILF.. - nelly/diddy/lee	112839	DANCE COMMANDER - electric six	112876	RE-OFFENDER - travis	112975

*Yes!!! All Ringtones are Monophonic and Polyphonic**

POLYPHONICS COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA: 3510, 3510i, 6610, 7210, 7650. SAMSUNG: T100, N600. SHARP: GX10. SONY ERICSSON: T300. SAGEM: MYG-5. MOTOROLA: T720. PANASONIC: GD87. SIEMENS: C55.
RINGTONE COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA: 3210, 3310, 3330, 3410, 5210, 5510, 61XX, 62XX, 6310, 6310i, 8210, 8310, 8110i, 88XX, 7110, 7210, 7650, AND THE 9110i. SAGEM: MC930, MC/MW932, MC936, MC/MW939, MC940, MC942, MC946, MC949 MC950, MC952, MC956 & MC959(R) MOTOROLA: T250, V50, V100, V6088 & TIMEPORT 280 SAMSUNG: T100, N600 SIEMENS: S45, SL45, C45, ME45, M50, A50, C55

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WI...

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THE ANTHEM - good charlotte	112493
FAINT - linkin park	112713
NUMB - linkin park	112886
LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH.. - g charlotte	112388

reggae

GET BUSY - sean paul	112634
NO WOMAN NO CRY - bob marley	111331
GIMME THE LIGHT - sean paul	112422
ANGEL - shaggy	111114

club classics

SATISFACTION - benny benassi	112751
CAFE DEL MAR - energy 52	111386
INSOMNIA - faithless	111569
ITS LIKE THAT - run dmc/jason nevins	112901

chill out

CHILDREN - robert miles	111361
BRAVEHEART - dj sakin	111719
UNFINISHED SYMPATHY - mas. attack	112437
FOR AN ANGEL - paul van dyk	111363

grunge

SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT - nirvana	112930
ALL MY LIFE - foo fighters	112913
ALIVE - pearl jam	112956
LEARN TO FLY - foo fighters	112922

urban

MUNDIAN TO BACH KE - panjabi mc	112342
FAVOURITE THINGS - big brovaz	112560
SCANDALOUS - mis-teeq	112444
CAN'T GET IT BACK - mis-teeq	112733

chart

FAST FOOD SONG - fast food rockers	112702
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL - robbie	112840
ROCK YOUR BODY - justin timberlake	112508
SLEEPING WITH THE LIGHT.. - busted	112819
NEVER GONNA LEAVE.. - d.bedingfield	112710
IT'S A CHEEKY HOLIDAY - cheeky girls	112882
FEEL GOOD TIME - pink	112755
SEND YOUR LOVE - sting	112971
GET IT TOGETHER - seal	112952
YEAR 3000 - busted	112344
IF YOU'RE NOT THE.. - d. bedingfield	112311
FIGHTER - christina aguilera	112649
CRY ME A RIVER - justin timberlake	112360
UNWELL - matchbox twenty	112748
INNOCENT EYES - delta goodrem	112770

r & b

BREATHE - blu cantrell feat. sean paul	112521
IGNITION - REMIX - r kelly	112642
NEVER LEAVE YOU - lumidee	112774
FRONTIN - pharrell williams feat jay z	112855
SNAKE - r kelly feat tigger	112687
NO LETTING GO - wayne wonder	112690

party time

ONE STEP BEYOND - madness	111278
THE CHEEKY SONG - the cheeky girls	112313
KUNG FU FIGHTING - carl douglas	111419

football

ARE YOU READY FOR LOVE - elton john	112869
MR BIG STUFF - SOCCER AM - j knight	112559
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE - liverpool	111351
MATCH OF THE DAY - match of the day	111126
GREAT ESCAPE - sheffield wednesday	111354
LIFE OF RILEY - lightning seeds	112880
BLUE IS THE COLOUR - chelsea*	111348
GLORY GLORY - man utd*	111353
WERE ON THE BALL - ant and dec	111958
WHEN THE SAINTS GO.. - southampton	112645
3 LIONS - baddiel & skinner*	111494
VINDALOO - fat les	111349
NEWCASTLE ANTHEM - newcastle*	111357
HOU'LL LET THE DOGS OUT - liverpool	111355
TUBTHUMPER - chumbawamba	111209
MARCHIN ON TOGETHER - leeds*	111350
BLUE MOON - man city*	111352
EAT MY GOAL - collapsed lung*	111356
COUNTRY ROAD - hermes house band	111571
SVEN SVEN SVEN - bell and sperling*	111470
HERE COME THE GOOD.. - irish squad*	111964
ARSENAL - GO WEST - pet shop boys	112647

indie

I JUST DON'T KNOW.. - w stripes	112892
GENIE IN A BOTTLE - speedway	112917
SEVEN NATION ARMY - white stripes	112604
FOOLS GOLD - stone roses	111230

hip hop

IN DA CLUB - 50 cent	112440
21 QUESTIONS - 50 cent feat nate dogg	112582
BUSINESS - eminem	112695
X GONNA GIVE IT TO YA - dmx	112617
FORGET ABOUT DRE - dr dre	111138
LOSE YOURSELF - eminem	112289
BEAUTIFUL - snoop dogg	112511
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT - b rhymes	112561
SUPERMAN - eminem	112427
FEELIN YOU - n.o.r.e	112660
HOT BOYS - missy elliot	112685
HELL YEAH - ginuwine feat baby	112771
LETS GET DOWN - bow wow feat baby	112935
HOW YOU WANT THAT - loon and kelis	112945

dance

FLY ON THE WINGS OF LOVE - xtm	112705
HEAVEN - dj sammy	112229
LONELINESS - tomcraft	112576
THE POWER OF BHANGRA - snap vs	112910
DEEPEST BLUE - deepest blue	112821
TOO FAR GONE - lisa scott-lee	112865

night fever

PUSH IT - salt-n-pepa	112551
DANCING QUEEN - abba	111111
YMCA - village people	111435

ibiza essential

MAKE LOVE - room 5	112465
SANDSTORM - darude	111290
I'M IN HEAVEN - jason nevins	112781

rock

BRING ME TO LIFE - evanescence	112651
SWEET CHILD O MINE - guns and roses	111258
BAT OUT OF HELL - meatloaf	111286
LIVING ON A PRAYER - bon jovi	111376
ENTER SANDMAN - metallica	111371

ballads

DANCE WITH MY FATHER - l vandross	112973
ANGELS - robbie williams	112646
RED RED WINE - ub40	111248

irish

FIELDS OF ATHENRY	112470
BROWN EYED GIRL - van morrison	111327
WHISKEY IN THE JAR	112474

themes

ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES	111369
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	111121
THE SIMPSONS	111132
ROCKY - jogging theme	112481
EXORCIST	111871
JACKASS	112554
SCOOBY DOO	111142
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DRIVER 3 GOTTA-SEE PICS!

2 MUST-HAVE POSTERS!

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

computer and video games

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

53 NEW PICS!

Grind, climb and drive your way to becoming the new Pro Skater! Played to death ONLY in CVG

NEW PICS!

METAL GEAR 3

EXCLUSIVE INFO INSIDE

RED-HOT AND RATED!

WWE RAW 2

JAK II

YU-GI-OH!, BUFFY 2

SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

WRESTLEMANIA XIX

ADVANCE WARS 2

VIEWTIFUL JOE

JEDI ACADEMY

DOOM III

WE'VE PLAYED IT!
FIRST HANDS-ON VERDICT INSIDE

PLUS! GT 4 VS MARIO KART VS GOTHAM 2

Who'll take first place in this vicious fight to the finish line?

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

OUTTA THE WAY TEKKEN, DBZ IS PS2'S MOST EXPLOSIVE FIGHTER EVER!

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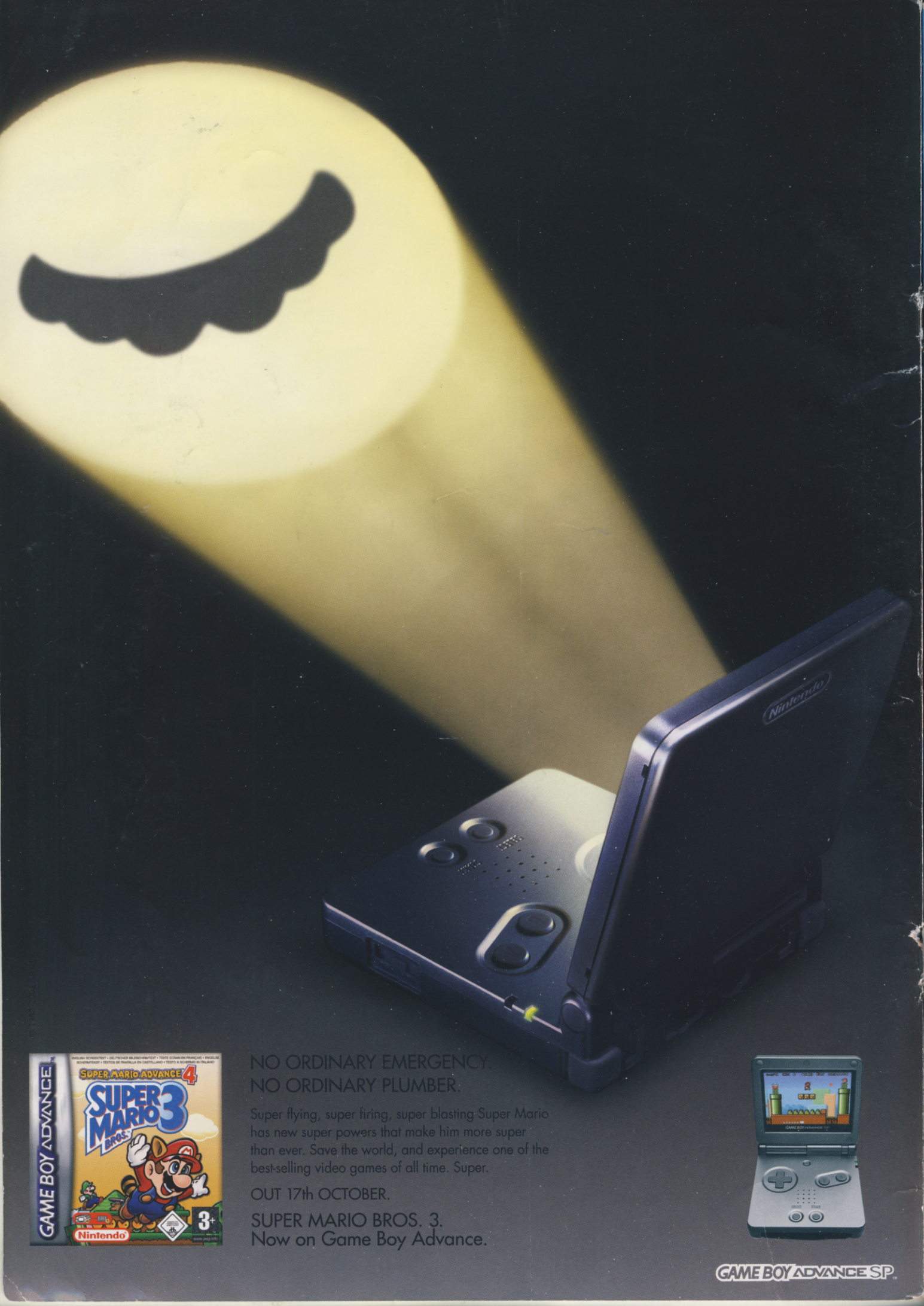

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GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

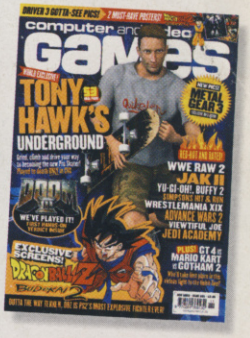
SECOND-PLACE IS FOR LOSERS...

Got a dictionary? Look up 'exclusive'. Alongside 'not shared' and 'found only in one place' you'll find CVG. Why? Because what you hold in your hands is the very definition of the word exclusive. And this issue is a perfect example, being quite literally packed with games, gossip and great screens games you won't find anywhere else.

When Activision wanted to give out the world's first hands-on playtest of Tony Hawk's Underground, which mag did they choose? And where can you find never-before-seen pics of the new Dragon Ball Z fighter, the first verdict on Doom III and the exclusive review of Simpson's Hit & Run? If you answered CVG to all of the above, give yourself a gold star – looks like a CVG regular so you know we always bring the exclusives on the games you want to know about.

But just because CVG is filled with exclusives, doesn't mean we it exclusive. We're confident that anyone who loves videogames will love CVG, for one simple reason – we love 'em too, which is why we bust our nuts to bring the very best games and info every month.

Alex Simmons Editor



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Why you MUST play the Hawkster's new genre-bender. Another CVG exclusive

14 DOOM III
Nerve-jangling single-player and four-way multiplayer busted open like a point-blank headshot. PLUS: never-seen-before new screenshots!

87 WWE RAW 2
Will the sequel rub salt in the wounds of the original or can WWE fans now start to take Xbox seriously?

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The three greatest racers ever are at the starting grid. The winner could turn the tide in the console wars...

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It's a permissive society we live in, so there's no shame in cheating. Just don't tell your mates

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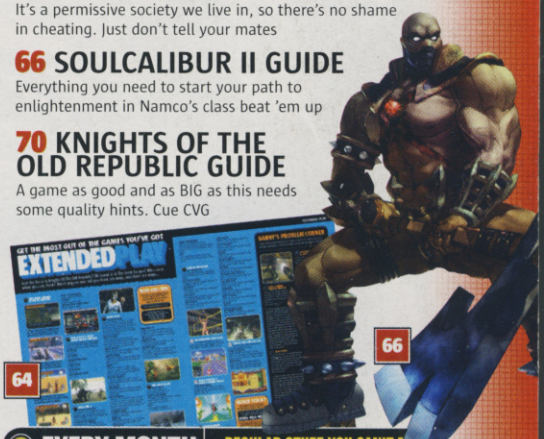

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The most extraordinarily cool prize to be won

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BELLAMY
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REEBOK STRIKEZONE. FOOTBALL'S FIRST HIDDEN LACE SYSTEM.

planet cvg

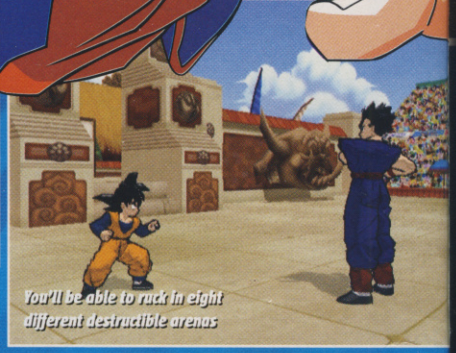
HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

RE-ENTER THE DRAGON

DRAGON BALL Z RETURNS FOR MORE MARTIAL ARTS INSANITY

EXCLUSIVE

Piccolo sends Goku hurtling into a mountainside with the mother of all haymakers



You'll be able to ruck in eight different destructible arenas

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

Goku and the crazy Dragon Ball Z cast are warming up for this year's most explosive cartoon rumble. The spiky-haired hero returns exclusively to PS2 on November 14, and Planet CVG has busted its balls to get you the first facts and exclusive screenshots.

If you thought last year's DBZ game captured the excitement of the TV series, wait till you get your hands on this new and improved beat 'em up battle royale. The fights are mental. There are eight destructible environments for you to mash up, and when it kicks off all the explosive special powers, swish effects and blinding new character animations cause the screen to erupt with colourful mayhem.

The most ferocious DBZ warriors ever made are all in here, with a total of 34 making an appearance throughout the game. Again each brawler has their own variety of unique moves and they'll be heaps more to master in this stylish sequel.

NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN SHOTS!

Take part in epic battles in the new Dragon World mode. Here you can carve your own story and enjoy startlingly different endings

the team

SAY HELLO NICELY TO ALL THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THE MAG

Alex Simmons
EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Pro Evo 3
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Advance Wars 2

Fourteen is an important number for our Alex. It's the number of years he's been a games journalist; the number of days it took him to get an import PS2 after it launched in Japan, the number of times he's finished a Metal Gear game... It's also the number of seconds it takes him to pleasure a woman. Allegedly.

Pete Walker
DEP EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- LOTR: Return Of The King
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Viewtiful Joe

Pete's Tribes: Vengeance fixation has entered a new phase. Starting every day by scouring the Net and harassing Vivendi for the latest information, every time he finds a new screenshot he saves it into a special folder on his desktop that he routinely fondles with his cursor, chuckling strangely to himself. And we're a bit worried it's only gonna get worse...

Lee Skittrell
REVIEWS EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Pokemon Ruby
- Jak II
- Buffy 2

Lee's all torn up. He's a mere Poké-ball's throw away from finishing Ruby, but has also just taken delivery of the first four seasons of Buffy on DVD. Like a mad rabbit caught in the bright lights of all that excitement, he forgot who he was, where he lived and failed to turn up to work for four days. At least, that's what he told Alex.

Mike Cooper
NEWS EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Halo
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Pro Evo 3

Still stinging after last month's Challenge CVG battering at Halo, Mike's spent hours every day replaying Halo from scratch in Legendary difficulty "for research on Halo 2." So fearsome are his skills now that no one's dared take him on in multiplayer, forcing him to tour the office like a tramp begging matches off the cannon fodder, er advertising team.

NEWS NUGGETS

UNMISSABLE BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET

PAPER THIN PLUMBER

Mario's dusting off his dungarees for another adventure on Cube. Nintendo has confirmed that a new Paper Mario game is pencilled in for release some time during the first half of 2004.

THIS MONTH'S BEST RUMOUR

Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty is currently in development for GameCube as well as Twin Snakes. It's believed that Silicon Knights is the team working on the sneakathon.

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID 3 SNAKE EATER

KOJIMA REVEALS ALL: NEW FACTS AND KILLER SHOTS!

TURN OVER NOW!

Buu doesn't take kindly to his opponent telling him he looks like a giant testicle

1

2

Bzzz-ack! The special attacks in DBZ 2 are even more devastating this time round

Plus now you can absorb enemies and perform Fusion, enabling you to combine fighters. You even get to use bad man Buu, and fight with him in each of his three intimidating forms – Maijin Buu, Kid Buu and Super Buu.

As well as all the cool new combatants and spectacular moves, there's a major new single-player option called Dragon World mode. Here you get to join up with a team of computer-controlled characters and journey on a fierce fighting quest to capture all seven of the legendary Dragon Balls. Don't miss our explosive verdict next issue and find out if it's as good as it sounds... CVG

DRAGON BALL BOOTY

We're giving you the chance to blag Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2 as soon as it hits the shelves this November. There are four copies of the game up for grabs!

If that's not enough, we're also offering you the opportunity to win a Dragon Ball Z DVD. We've got two copies of Dragonball Z: Super Saiya Son Goku (on sale now), and two copies of Dragon Ball Z: Super Battle In The World (out on October 13) to give away. Just answer this question to be in with a shot of being one of eight lucky winners.

Which of these is one of Goku's attacks?

- A. Spirit bomb
- B. Soul grenade

Send your answers on a postcard to Dragon Ball Booty, CVG, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD (deadline for entries October 22)

FIRST CHUNKY DETAILS

THE PHANTOM MENACE

It's out to spook Xbox with its supernatural powers

Infinium Labs has revealed the first facts about its forthcoming console, the Phantom! Here's the shocker. It makes Xbox seem about as powerful as a pocket calculator.

And if that wasn't enough of a threat to Xbox's crown as the heavyweight champ of the console world, the Phantom looks about as heavy as a bus... with a herd of elephants sat on board.

Its 3Ghz processor dwarfs Xbox's measly 733Mhz offering. Add a 100Gb hard disk, Dolby Digital 7.1 Surround Sound and the latest super swish nVidia graphics card and you've got a beast on your hands.

Sounds like a PC! Well it is, kind of. Infinium Labs intends it to be a 'console' dedicated to the online experience, enabling gamers to download PC games on demand. You'll be able to play multiplayer titles over the Net via broadband. However, no matter how impressive this all seems, Infinium Labs is a relatively unknown company. So considering Xbox has got the biggest bank account in the world funding it and the top developers and publishers on its side, the Phantom has got one helluva fight ahead of it when it's released in 2004.

Technically the Phantom outguns Microsoft's monster console in every department

PHANT FACT FLASH

- *Downloadable PC games*
- *Wireless keyboard and mouse*
- *Wireless controller*
- *3Ghz CPU*
- *Dolby Digital 7.1 Surround Sound*
- *100Gb hard disk*
- *Onboard wireless RF modules*
- *10/100 baseT Ethernet*
- *2 USB ports*
- *4 controller ports*
- *Online multiplayer events*

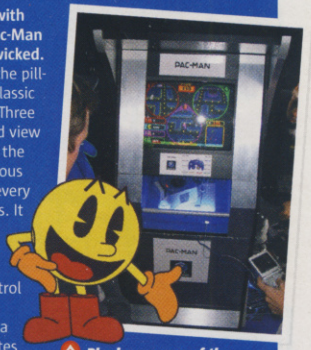
THE ORIGINAL GHOSTBUSTER

GOBBLE UP THE FUN ON GAMECUBE

This month CVG got hands-on with Nintendo's new multiplayer Pac-Man game for GameCube, and it's wicked.

It's back to basics, with all the pill-guzzling action taking place in classic mazes. There is a twist though. Three of you play ghosts with a limited view on the GameCube screen, while the fourth player controls the ravenous yella fella on GBA who can see every movement of his spooky hunters. It works brilliantly. Once the player controlling Pac-Man gets caught, the ghost who catches the Pizza-shaped hero takes control of him on GBA.

Nintendo is still to confirm a release date, but CVG guestimates that we won't see hide nor hair of this arcade treat until spring next year at the earliest.



Playing as one of the ghosts is just as thrilling as being Pac-Man

Graeme Boyd
STAFF WRITER
CURRENT FAVES
- Project Gotham 2
- GT4
- Tony Hawk's Underground

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Unless you're Graeme, in which case when in London, try to make London do as his native Scots do. Which might explain why, after a couple of strong shandies one night, he attempted to persuade the entire CVG team to "come to Aberdeen and my Mum will cook you all neeps and tatties." We said no.

Paul Davies
CONTRIBUTING ED
CURRENT FAVES
- Pro Evo 2
- Pokemon Sapphire
- Soulcalibur II

Capcom has Megaman as its long-serving mascot, CVG has Paul. And just like any other cuddly toy, Paul likes nothing better than being stroked and petted by passing PR honeys who think he's cute like a giant teddy. In fact, he enjoys the mascot role so much he's suspected of moonlighting as the guy inside Arsenal's Gunnersaurus suit. There he is!

Jaime Smith
ART EDITOR
CURRENT FAVES
- Pro Evo 3
- F-Zero GX
- Zelda: Wind Waker

Jaime's just about the only person in the UK who's never opened a Harry Potter book, nor played a Potter game or even watched a Potter movie. At PlayStation Experience he refused to even look at Quidditch. "It'll never hold any interest for me," he vowed. Until EA and Konami announce Potter PES12... We're pretending it might happen just to torture him.

Jenny McComb
SENIOR DESIGNER
CURRENT FAVES
- Gregory Horror
- Voodoo Vince
- Billy Hatcher

This issue a reader wrote in to tell CVG that he likes the look of Jenny and could we please have her as our centrefold poster. Double-sided, no less. Well how would you feel? Kind of flattered at the attention of a tad worried you have a stalker in the making? Jenny has taken to carrying a huge stick when she walks up the road, to beat away all the men following her.

Roseanna Negrotti
ACTING PROD ED
CURRENT FAVES
- Project Gotham 2
- Tony Hawk's Underground
- Backyard Wrestling

There are no flies on this Rose. She's taken to the subbing dominatrix's hotseat a little too easily, and is already cracking the whip, sending CVG staff scurrying around the office doing her every bidding like frightened mice. She's a regular font of knowledge on employment law too. Did you know that production staff are legally exempt from making the coffee?

F-ZERO ON THE BOX

The super-fast world of F-Zero is being made into a cartoon in Japan. Subtitled 'Legend of the Falcon', it features Capt Falcon battling against corruption in the racing community. Lots of 3D race sequences are promised.

THIS MONTH'S WORST RUMOUR

Whispers reach us that, disappointed by recent Mario sales, Nintendo's packing the chubby sink-fixer off for a long break. Needless to say, Mario isn't being permanently retired.

XBOX BARGAIN HUNT

Budget distributor Phoenix Games has announced a range of Xbox games at the cheap as chips price of £9.99. The first couple are called Drug Wars and Crime Control. David would be proud.

Hot or Not?

MANHUNT

We're still getting sick kicks from Vice City, but all anyone is talking about is Manhunt. Rockstar's all-new ultra violent nightmare will be bloodying UK shelves this October. It's going to be a gloriously gory Christmas.

EYE TOY: PLAY

Cleaning imaginary windows and karate chopping thin air! Everybody's going ape for Eye Toy, and it's selling like icepops in a heatwave. It's a giant slayer. First it knocked Tomb Raider: The Angel Of Darkness off the top spot in the sales charts, and then it went and shoved Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire into second and third place.

SEGA BICYCLE

You can only get one in Japan, but this fold-up Sega branded bike makes the top ten in CVG's Christmas wish list. If you have the means and the ways, you can pick one up for around 130 smackers. We definitely wouldn't say no...

DONKEY KONGA

GameCube owners have been waiting yonks for a proper new Donkey Kong game, and what's the best Nintendo can come up with? Donkey Konga! A rhythm action farce that'll see you tapping out beats using a bongo peripheral.

BEYBLADE

It may have taken playgrounds by hurricane-force storm, but the Beyblade PSone game was about as dramatic and devastating as a hamster fart. And it smelt a whole lot worse too.

CRACKED WIDE OPEN

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID® 3

SNAKE EATER

HANGING OUT WITH HIDEO KOJIMA

EXCLUSIVE

This month CVG hooked up with Solid Snake's creator for a sneaky chat about Metal Gear Solid 3.

We considered tying him up and torturing him Jack Bauer-style for information. But before we even had a chance to get out the rope and duct tape, Kojima spilled his guts (rather politely and helpfully) about some of the most exciting features in MGS3. Go us!

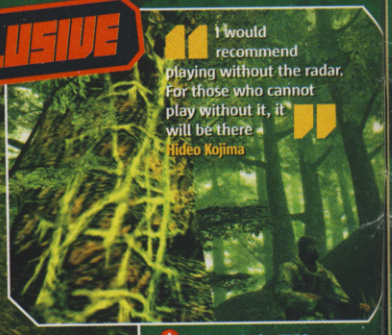
THE INVISIBLE MAN

There will be extra downloadable content this time round. Kojima wouldn't tell us more than you'll be able to get extra camouflage online. And by the looks of it, choosing the right camo is going to be essential in MGS3, as wearing the wrong kit will make you stick out like a sore thumb.

> There are some moments when you can't see Snake
> Hideo Kojima

Select camo that's perfectly suited to your surroundings and disappear

> I would recommend playing without the radar. For those who cannot play without it, it will be there
> Hideo Kojima



Although the MGS radar was an innovative visual aid, it stripped a certain amount of adrenalin-fuelled anxiety from the action

THE GREAT OUTDOORS (AND INDOORS)

It's not all jungle-based action. Kojima revealed to us that much of the action will also take place on mountainsides and inside enemy bases.

> If you go into the mountains, there could be an underground base, for example. When you get into the base, you have conventional Metal Gear gameplay where there are enemies and you have to go through buildings.
> Hideo Kojima

Well what did you expect? They're not going to let you into their secret underground base without a fight

TURNING UP THE TENSION

The radar has gone! Okay, you can switch it on if you want, but Kojima is really hoping that the new structure of Snake Eater's gameplay will encourage gamers to brave it without knowing where all the enemies are. We're game, for sure

EXTRA FACTS

1 IMPROVED GROUP ENEMY AI:
The patrol and attack formations are far more flexible and realistic

2 FULL USE OF 5.1 SURROUND SOUND:
Snap a twig with guards nearby and they'll track in on where the noise came from. Shhh!

3 WEIRD BITS OF ANIMAL CAMO:
You'll come across and be able to use strange items of camouflage like an alligator head, which helps keep you well concealed in water

4 BROKEN BONES AND ILLNESSES:
Land badly and you'll break a limb. Eat a dodgy animal and it'll make you sick, affecting your abilities

THE NEWS IN PICTURES

THE BANANA BOOGIE

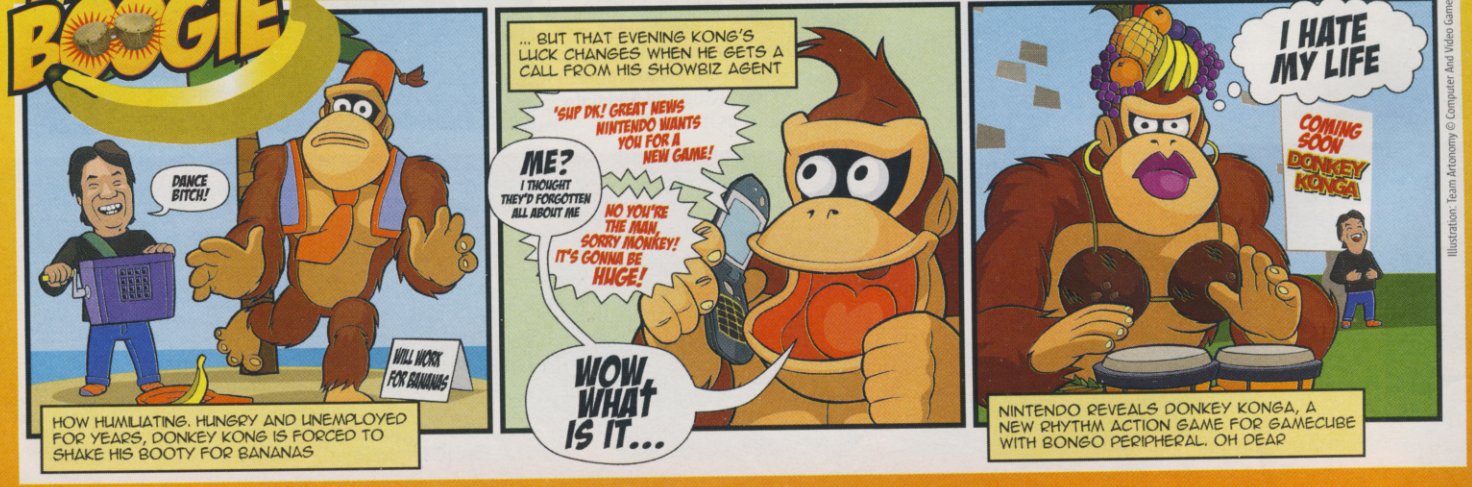


Illustration: Team Arronomy © Computer And Video Games

TIMESPLITTERS 3

TimeSplitters developer Free Radical's next game, Second Sight, is being published by Activision not Eidos. TimeSplitters 3 is expected to follow suit. Champ Man creator Sports Interactive has split from Eidos, too.

E-READER SCAN-DAL

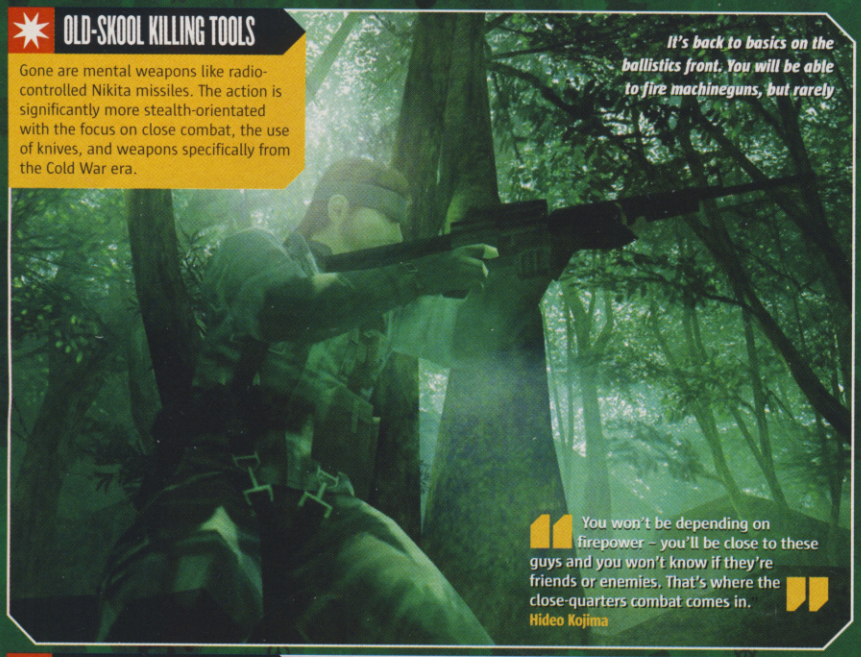
It's doing well in Japan and the States but Nintendo's GBA E-Reader won't be getting a UK release. The device lets you open up game content and play old NES games by scanning cards, and is being given away free with new GBAs in the US.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PIKMIN GONE?

Yep, Captain Olimar and his colourful colleagues have gone missing and aren't expected to reappear until Summer 2004. Nintendo officially announced this new release date for Europe this month.

OLD-SKOOL KILLING TOOLS

Gone are mental weapons like radio-controlled Nikita missiles. The action is significantly more stealth-orientated with the focus on close combat, the use of knives, and weapons specifically from the Cold War era.

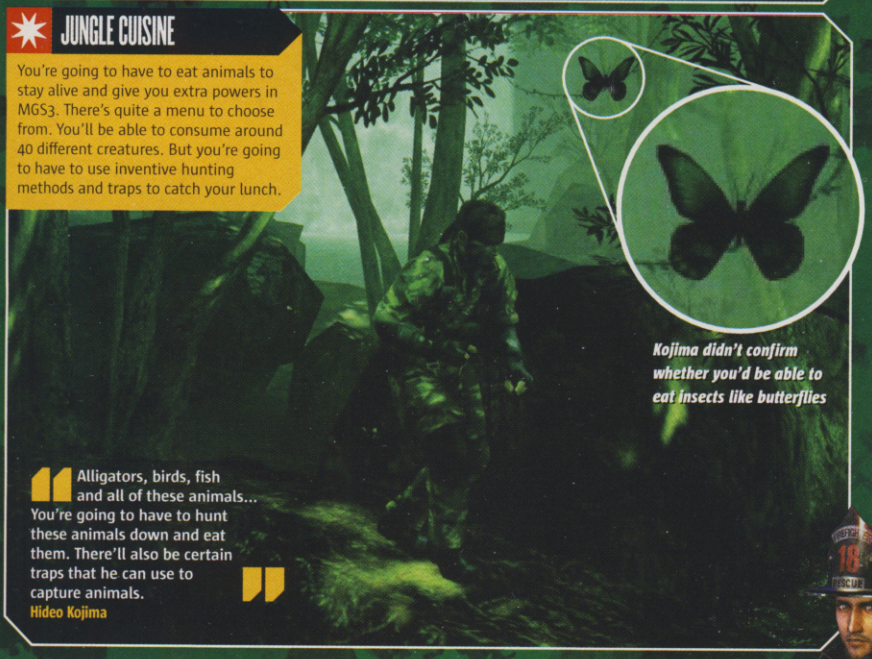


It's back to basics on the ballistics front. You will be able to fire machineguns, but rarely

"You won't be depending on firepower – you'll be close to these guys and you won't know if they're friends or enemies. That's where the close-quarters combat comes in."
Hideo Kojima

JUNGLE CUISINE

You're going to have to eat animals to stay alive and give you extra powers in MGS3. There's quite a menu to choose from. You'll be able to consume around 40 different creatures. But you're going to have to use inventive hunting methods and traps to catch your lunch.



Kojima didn't confirm whether you'd be able to eat insects like butterflies

"Alligators, birds, fish and all of these animals... You're going to have to hunt these animals down and eat them. There'll also be certain traps that he can use to capture animals."
Hideo Kojima

N-COMING ON N-GAGE

Five biggies headed to Nokia's mobile gaming midget

HANDS-ON

■ We gave N-gage Tony Hawk a good grind around the skatepark and the good news is that it feels nice and smooth. The level

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

designs are more like the first two games but there's still plenty of room for flipping off phat tricks. Wireless linkups should be nice.

■ Ubi Soft's fantastic stealth 'em up will be making a sneaky appearance on N-Gage too. It's 2D, viewed from the side like the

SPLINTER CELL

mobile phone version, but the softly-softly gameplay mechanics remain and a new two-player co-op mode sounds very interesting.

■ The big Frenchman's little football game should offer all the kicks you can handle. It's viewed from a Pro-Evo-esque

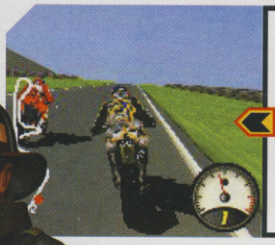
MARCEL DESAILLY'S PRO SOCCER

grandstand perspective and the visuals look pretty good for the small screen. There are six game modes and wireless two-player.

■ First-person shooter guru John Romero has been giving the N-Gage big licks, so we're eager to see how this port of the PS2

RED FACTION

game plays. The 3D environments do appear to be pretty smooth and the guns look meatier than a quarter pounder with extra meat.



■ THQ's brilliant superbike racing simulator will be providing the road rash on N-Gage. It's got all the things that

MOTO GP

made the console versions solid, like official tracks, bikes and riders, variable weather conditions and ultra-fast action.

ARSON AROUND

THIS FIRE-FIGHTING ROMP IS A SCORCHER

Firemen have all the luck. They've got massive red trucks and the girls always fancy them.

Konami's Firefighter FD: 18 is going to let you have a go. Set in a sprawling metropolis, you play square-jawed firefighter Dean McGregor investigating a series of arson attacks. Looks a bit like a chargrilled Metal Gear, with a similar viewpoint and radar system. Flame effects look red hot and backdrafts, flashovers and chemical explosions are all promised.

There's even a lovely lady who won't be able to resist your smoky charms. It all sparks off next February.

The fires will react realistically, spreading through buildings and blowing stuff up. So check the battery on your smoke alarm

Whip out your hose, get a flow going, and spray it all over the place. The higher you spray, the more girls you'll impress

"Not only are soldiers your enemy, the natural environment is also fighting against you, including the animals... There are fruits, poisonous snakes, rats – if it's a poisonous snake you might be able to throw it at someone."

Hideo Kojima talks to CVG about Metal Gear Solid 3

COWABUNGA!

Konami has confirmed that the pizza-loving amphibians will be bursting onto PS2, Xbox, GC, PC and GBA next year. Like the arcade game it'll be a side-scrolling beat 'em up, but the cel-shaded Ninja Turtles will look heaps better.

PES3 COMING TO PC

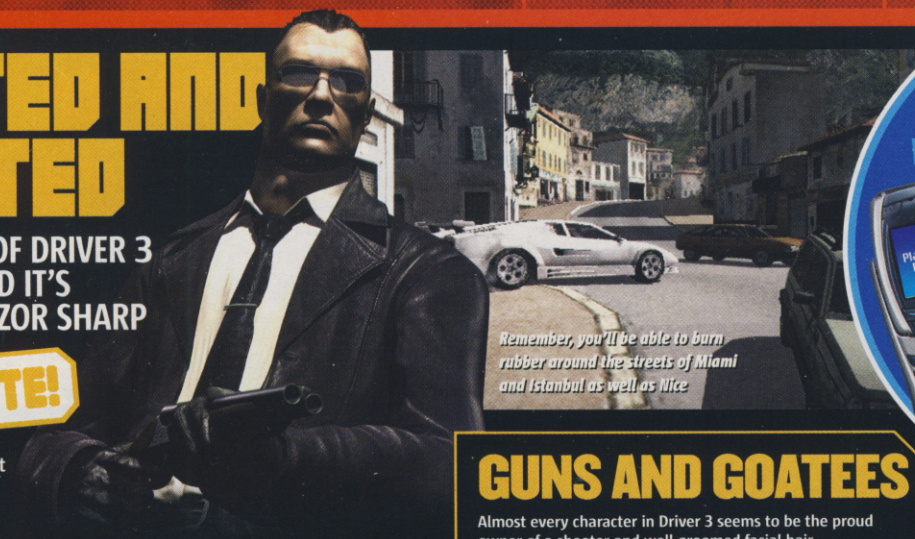
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Yep, you read it right. Pro Evo is no longer exclusive to PS2. The world's greatest football game is definitely headed to PC, and will boast improved player models and sharper graphics. It's scheduled for a November debut alongside the PS2 version.

SUITED AND BOOTED

MORE PICS OF DRIVER 3 EMERGE, AND IT'S LOOKING RAZOR SHARP

UPDATE!



Remember, you'll be able to burn rubber around the streets of Miami and Istanbul as well as Nice

Atari has got its lip securely buttoned about Driver 3. No extra nuggets of info have been revealed since we last featured the game in Planet CVG back in April.

Instead, Atari insists on teasing the hell out of us with tantalising new shots of the main man in action, on the sunny streets of Nice in the south of France.

But at least it gives a flavour of what's in store come spring 2004. You'll find yourself tearing around in Lamborghinis, taking on gunmen hidden in the backs of trucks, and going mental with a shotgun.

Admittedly there's nothing here we haven't already seen in the likes of GTA or The Getaway, but CVG has a sneaking suspicion that Atari is keeping its cards close to its chest for a reason. We're banking on it revealing some big surprises and awesome gameplay innovations soon. Don't let us down now.

A dodgy geezer pumps buckshot in your direction. Git!

It's got to be 35° and our man is wearing a suit. He might look cool, but we bet he's got a really sweaty gusset

PSP PERKS

EXCITING NEW ADD-ONS!

Sony's top banana Ken Kutaragi has been blabbing about the up-and-coming PSP to a Japanese newspaper – and it's all good stuff.

We already knew that Sony was planning to make PSP compatible with other hardware, such as PCs and music devices. But Kutaragi has shed more light on a couple of peripherals that we can expect to see released alongside PSP. He stated that there would be camera and mobile phone accessories. How they'll work is anyone's guess right now, but we'll be sure to bring you the full story soon.

GUNS AND GOATEES

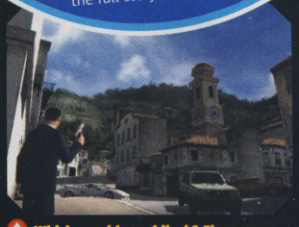
Almost every character in Driver 3 seems to be the proud owner of a shooter and well-groomed facial hair.

Except for that voluptuous girly seen below busy squidging her pistola into the big man's blubber gut. But chin fluff, girls and guns aside, the cutscenes in Driver 3 look blooming marvellous. Talk about atmosphere. Some of these shots look like they've been ripped straight from a super-polished Hollywood action flick. Neither Vice City, The Getaway nor True Crime have movie sequences of this quality.

Deceit, double-crosses and danger. Driver 3 is stuffed to the gills with all three

Only the Remington Fuzz-Away could be responsible for such a crisp mini-beard

"Hand over your lunch money fat boy or I'll pop you like a balloon"



Which would you hijack? The crappy little rust bucket or the ice white Lamborghini? Hmm, that's a tough one

Cocked, locked and loaded. We're expecting some ferocious shootouts this time out. And you got the right car...

SCREENSHOT MELTDOWN

UNREAL 2004

THE ULTIMATE MULTIPLAYER EXPERIENCE

Hop aboard and pilot nippy futuristic aircraft though tons of mammoth new environments

Chew up the dirt in buggies, exploit the huge firepower of tanks and bowl around in hovercrafts

THE X-GAMES

ONLINE SPORTS COMING TO XBOX

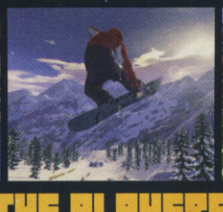
XSN SPORTS

Microsoft has unveiled its new brand of online sports videogaming dubbed XSN – and it's gonna be huge.

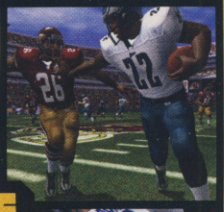
XSN enables you to link up Xbox Live with a PC and create your very own online leagues and tournaments for online play. So take a look below at the first games that will support XSN, and get excited.

TOP SPIN: Show 'em the back of your hand online

AMPED 2: Extreme mountainside multiplayer fun

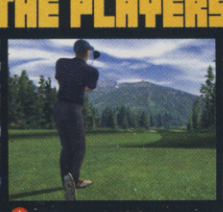


NFL FEVER 2004: Bone-crunching online madness

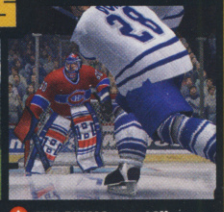


THE PLAYERS

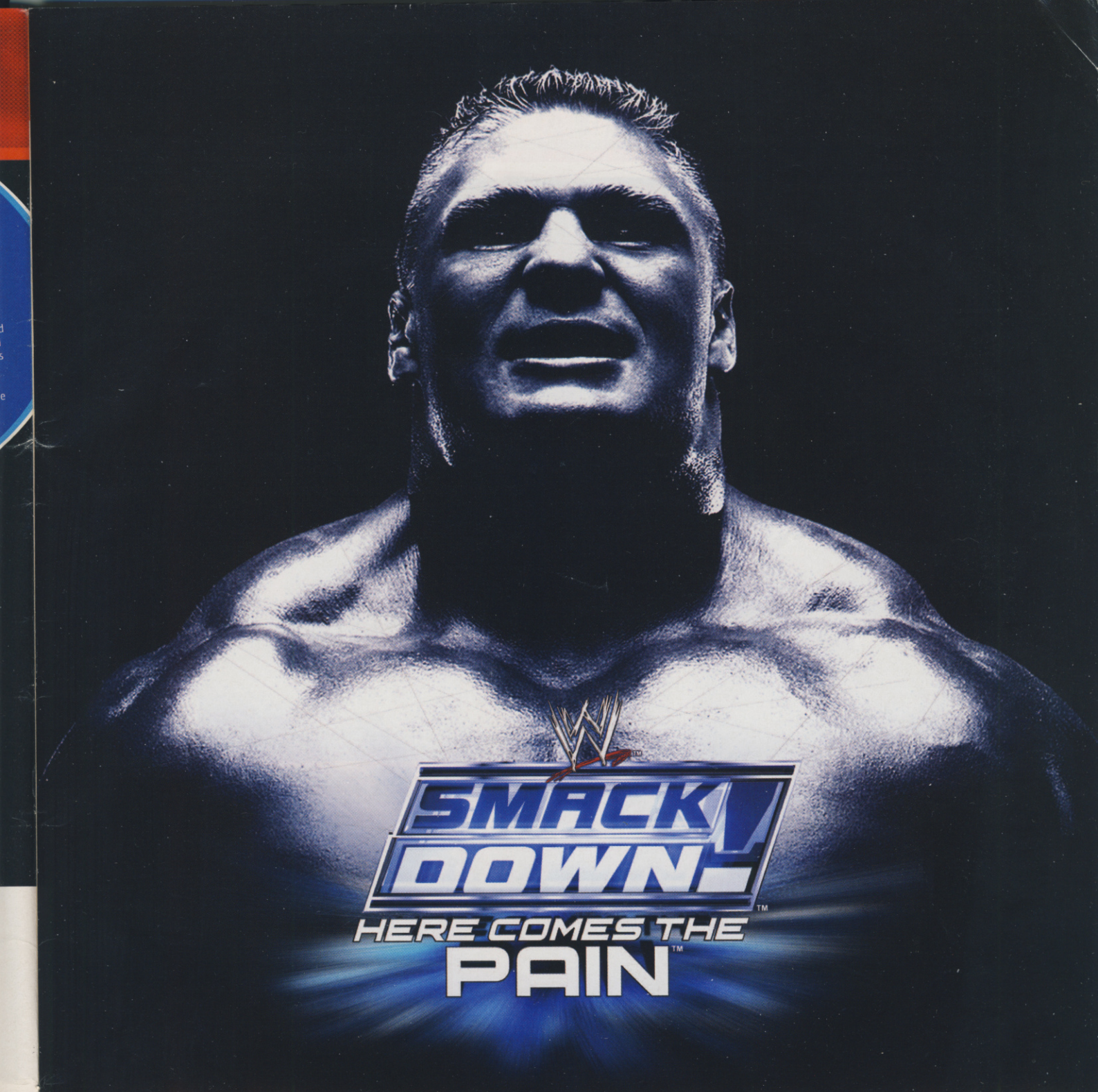
NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2004: Slam-dunk the funk



LINKS 2004: Clubs your balls onto the net



NHL RIVALS 2004: Slippery puck-whacking mania



NO PAIN - NO GAME

FEEL THE PAIN with unique SuperStar abilities. SEE THE PAIN in incredible detail as blood spatters the canvas. BEAT THE PAIN into submission with location specific damage and the best grappling system ever devised. But that ain't all! Bra and Panties matches, blood matches, SuperStar voice overs, enhanced season modes and the most realistic graphics to date mean if you don't get this game you won't be feeling no pain.

Future Media Creations YUKEES

World Wrestling Entertainment

PlayStation 2 NOVEMBER 2003

JAKKS Pacific inc.

THQ

www.thq.com

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Big Japan

IN THE FIRST OF A NEW COLUMN, PLANET CVG GOES TO THE MOVIES AND DISCOVERS THE SMALLEST TV DINNER IN THE WORLD

Spirited Away hits UK cinema screens this month. If you've not heard of it before, it's the biggest Japanese film of all time, taking more money at the Japanese box office than Titanic. It also walked away with the Best Animated Feature award at this year's Oscars.

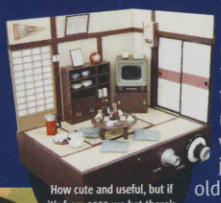
The movie comes from Studio Ghibli, a Japanese animation house that many believe is better than Disney. While Ghibli movies are phenomenally successful in Japan, Spirited Away is the first movie in their history to receive a UK theatrical release, so for many it will be the first chance to see the wealth of ideas that Studio Ghibli is renowned for.

All we can say is go and see this movie – you won't be disappointed!

Spirited Away tells the story of Chihiro and the strange spirit world she enters

WATCH AND LEARN

If you manage to catch Spirited Away you may want to track down some other Ghibli movies including My Neighbour Totoro, Porco Rosso and Princess Mononoke. Each has a strong plot, intelligent moral message as well as memorable characters. Watching each of them you'll see why the studio has been inspiring Japanese game developers including Shigeru Miyamoto since the early 80s.

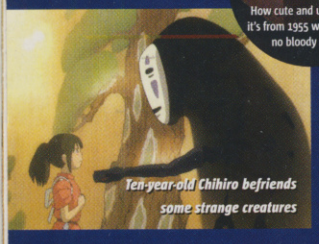


How cute and useful, but if it's from 1955 we bet there's no bloody remote

MINI RETRO

Here's the strangest new gadget we found in Japan this month, a miniature 1950's Japanese living room, complete with a working TV set.

Measuring 20cm tall, the diorama offers a scaled-down replica of a 1955 era telly. Using the latest technology the mini TV actually works, and not just to tune-in to old VHF and UHF signals either. You can hook it up to a video, DVD or even a console to play games. It's priced at just over £100 and makes a definite change from playing on a state-of-the-art 50-inch plasma screen.



Ten-year-old Chihiro befriends some strange creatures

JAPANESE TOP SELLING GAMES

1. Tales Of Symphonia (GC) Namco ..... 193,500 copies
2. Secret Of Mana (GBA) Square-Enix ..... 153,000 copies
3. World Soccer Winning Eleven 7 (PS2) Konami ..... 53,400 copies
4. Winning Post 6 (PS2) Koei ..... 33,900 copies
5. Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles (GC) Square-Enix ..... 20,300 copies

ONE RING FIVE NEW SHOTS

The trilogy is coming to an end, and it looks like EA has definitely saved the best for last. Check out Gandalf and his crew of archer buddies, Golum looking shifty, and all those mental battle sequences.

HANDS-ON EXCLUSIVE

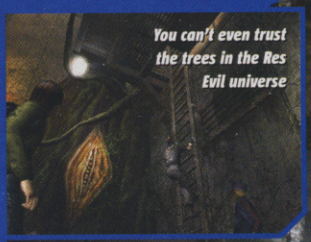
RESIDENT EVIL® OUTBREAK

SAFETY IN NUMBERS? FORGET IT!

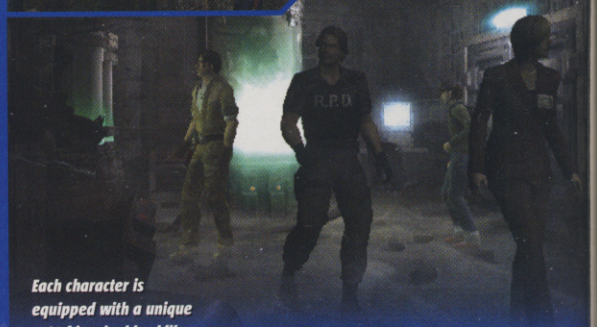
This month CVG had the chance to play Resi Outbreak with the producer of the game and a few mates. Even though it's online and multiplayer, the graphics don't suffer. It looks almost as devilishly handsome as Resident Evil 0.

During our hands-on session it was revealed that there are five different scenarios that are playable online with up to four players. You can also play through the same levels solo and team up with two other AI characters.

The atmosphere is typically chilling and it controls just like before. However, what's new to the seies is the ability to use hand-to-hand combat when you're unarmed. It'll be coming exclusively to PS2 at the end of March 2004.



You can't even trust the trees in the Res Evil universe



Each character is equipped with a unique set of invaluable skills

BE VEWY QUIET... I'M HUNTING MONSTERS

MONSTER HUNTER

There's going to be lots of luscious and varied environments to hunt in

Monsters react to each other, with carnivores savagely attacking their prey

You and three mates can form a hunting party to take down the beasts

Not content with unleashing scabby zombies through the phonelines with Resident Evil Outbreak, Capcom Japan has announced that Monster Hunter will be another online game exclusively for PS2.

You'll be able to choose your character's appearance and statistics and enter a world overrun by dragons and dinosaurs, making a living by doing some serious monster-mashing and picking up the bounty.

You can form a guild and establish a base to hang out in between hunts, but keep it well guarded – the monsters are hunting you too! There'll be loads of different species, and they'll all react with individual levels of intelligence and aggression.

Unfortunately there's no word yet as to whether Monster Hunter will reach these shores. More news as it emerges.

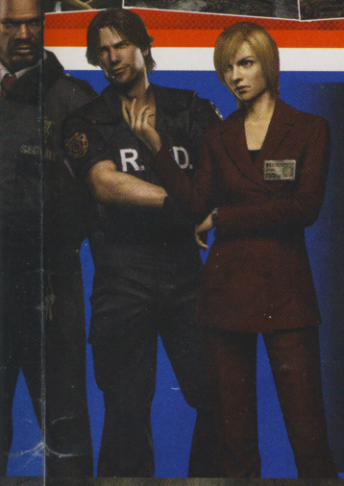
CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY

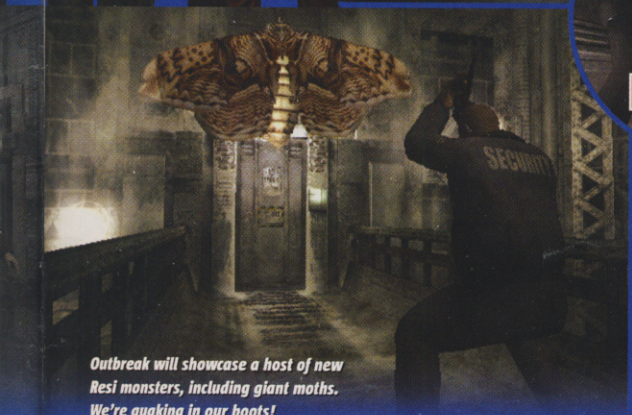
The prices of all three next gen consoles are to be slashed within a couple of months. Planet CVG's sources suggest that these are the costs we can expect to enjoy just in time for Crimbo.

PS2 – £129
XBOX – £99
GC – £79

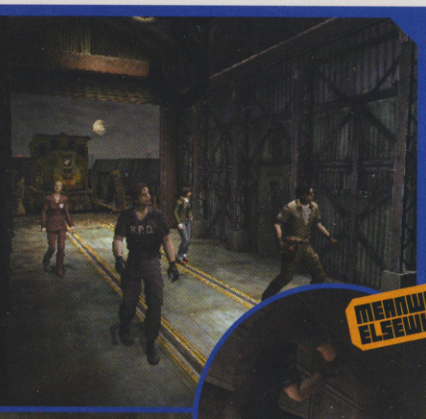
We've played it! Flip for first impressions on the ultimate survival horror shooter. It'll make your blood curdle

TURN OVER NOW!





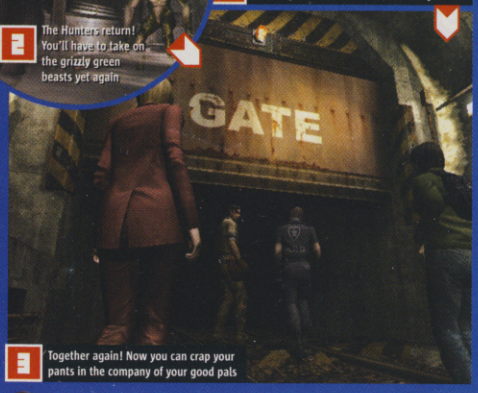
Outbreak will showcase a host of new Resi monsters, including giant moths. We're quaking in our boots!



MEANWHILE ELSEWHERE...

1 Splitting up is unavoidable sometimes. Be sure you learn how to take care of yourself

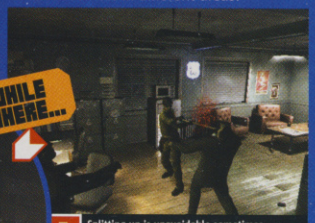
2 The Hunters return! You'll have to take on the grizzly green beasts yet again



3 Together again! Now you can crap your pants in the company of your good pals

NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM

Being alone isn't pleasant at the best of times, but when you're in a place crawling with groaning zombies hungry for flesh it's a darned sight worse. In Outbreak you often have to go it alone through certain sections of the game and meet up once you've taken care of business in different areas.

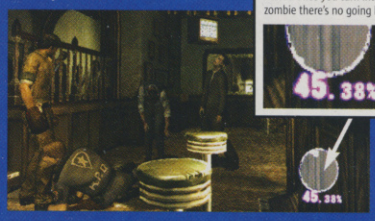


ONCE BITTEN...

If a zombie manages to sink its rancid teeth into your flesh, you'll get infected with a virus. You have to keep the infection level below 100 percent, by avoiding getting bitten too many times and healing yourself whenever possible. Fail to control it and you'll turn into a zombie!

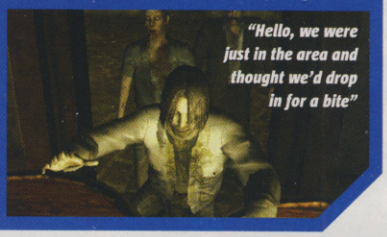
VIRUS METER

Keep a close eye on the virus meter. Once you turn into a zombie there's no going back!



CAN I KICK IT? YES YOU CAN!

In previous Resi games it's always been about hunting for keys to unlock new areas. However, in Outbreak you don't always need a key. Wooden doors can be beaten down or shot out. Only it takes much longer to break a door down than to unlock it with a key. Plus, if there's a drooling dead person gnawing on your leg it's pretty tough to kick anything.



"Hello, we were just in the area and thought we'd drop in for a bite"

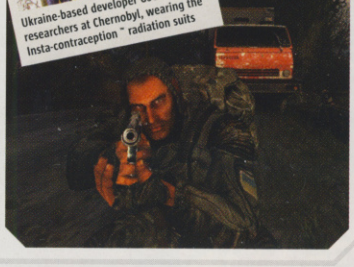
ONE TO WATCH

GORDON GOES MORROWSKI

Imagine Half-Life meets Morrowind. If Stalker lives up to its ambitions, that's what you'll get with THQ's new PC survival-shooter – the open mission structure and massive free-roaming environment of Morrowind, with an eerie, tense atmosphere and sci-fi conspiracy plot that Gordon Freeman would be proud of.

Hired by corporations to recover artefacts from the deserted and irradiated 30 Sq km around the site of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster, you're competing with other Stalkers, military patrols, mutants and strange metaphysical anomalies. Like an RPG, you'll be able to craft experimental equipment and join groupings as you advance, gaining access to unique weapons and missions. Out 2004, an Xbox version and full cooperative mode are also being considered.

Ukraine-based developer GSC's researchers at Chernobyl, wearing the Insta-contraception™ radiation suits



JOIN THE BIG LEAGUE

If you visit selected GAME stores you'll be able to pick up a fully playable demo of Pro Evolution Soccer 3 for a mere £1.99 when you pre-order a copy of the game. Of course you'll get this cash back when you buy the full game in November.

Buy the demo and you're eligible to apply for the first ever PES3 National League in association with CVG. There are thousands of pounds worth of prizes up for grabs. If you reckon you've got what it takes, sign up now!

MURDOK
Class: Shaman
Race: Troll

>Tetchy Troll seeks adventurous type for Goblin whipping. No time wasters :-(

You can find MURDOK@Snotspit River, Norrath.

A unique EverQuest online experience now available exclusively on PlayStation 2

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fun, anyone?
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DOOM III

NEWS SPECIAL

PREPARE FOR A JOURNEY TO HELL IN THE ULTIMATE HORROR SHOOTER

Sequels don't come much bigger than Doom III, the hellish first-person shooter from the lads that invented the genre.

Due on PC and Xbox in 2004, it's already shaping up to be one of the most terrifying and best-looking games of all time, and we've managed to blag an exclusive early play.

We always knew that Doom III was going to look incredible – that much was given. What we didn't know is that it's also going to be the most bed-wetting horror game of all time, out-spooking the rest with its superbly hellish environments and relentless array of monsters. We've had a behind-the-scenes peek at Doom III's huge solo campaign this month and rest assured, it's going to leave you reeling.

In one sequence you have to protect a scientist as he makes his way through a pitch-black level, only his wavering, failing light to guide you. Imps and demons emerge in bloodthirsty waves from the shadows, shocking you with the ferocity of their attacks. It's the concentrated terror of moments like these that really bring the reality home. Doom III is shaping up to be the ultimate survival horror game and we simply cannot wait.

The revival of 80s fashions meant the return of the shoulder pad. Green laser eyes are optional, though

"Dave, is that you? You look different somehow. New haircut? Lost a little weight?"

To rule this deathmatch map, you need the 30x-damage power-up hidden beneath the laser cannon. But try and avoid the beam!

NERVE-JANGLING

The key word in Doom III is atmosphere. The gameplay is familiar enough – creatures of hell have been unleashed on a Martian research base, and it's up to you to shoot them in the face until they stop moving. The graphics on the other hand, are like no game you've ever seen. The dense shadows dancing across the walls, the amazingly fluid animation, the incredible level of detail – it's no wonder other first-person shooters are flapping their hands in terror. Doom III is *the* FPS daddy.

WE'RE ALL DOOMED

Four-way online deathmatches get go-ahead!

As well as the brutal solo campaign, Doom III is set to have full multiplayer online action, with up to four players hammering it out in free-for-all deathmatches, two-on-two team matches and harrowing one-on-one duels. And that's just for starters.

We scored a look at the multiplayer action this month, taking on the developers in a brutal four-way deathmatch and coming away scarred.

The action is paced slower than we expected, probably a little slower than Halo, but with the claustrophobic corridors and insanely spooky shadows, it's a whole lot more intense.

Fans of the previous games will be right at home – the weapon set hasn't changed much, and all your favourites are in place ranging from the chainsaw and shotgun through to the rocket launcher and almighty BFG. It seems a shame that the game only supports up to four players, but from what we've seen this is only going to condense the action into an even more ferocious and punishing experience. Doom III is shaping up to be the most intense and gory FPS you've ever seen. Expect further online updates as we get them.

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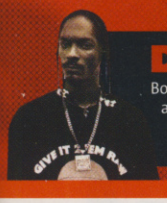


DOGGY STYLE

Booty-lovin' rap daddy Snoop Dogg is recording an all-new original track for True Crime: Streets Of LA. Over 50 original tunes from top hip hop artists like Ice Cube and Bad Azz will also be in there.

TFC THIS IS FOOTBALL 2004

Sony's very own footie game is now set for release just before Christmas. It'll be fully playable online and will feature over 18,000 players, 900 teams and 23 leagues.

STOP PRESS PLAYSTATION 3

It's official. Sony has confirmed that PS3 will be fully backward-compatible. Not only will you be able to play PS2 games on it, you can use it to play all your old PSone discs on it too!

KILLER CURVES

NICE BUTT, AND THE ONE ON HER PISTOL

ROGUE OPS
COMING TO XBOX, PS2 & GC

When you first see Rogue Ops up and running it looks just like Metal Gear, except the lead character is a girl called Nikki with one of the peachiest butts in the business. However, her ripe rump isn't the only attractive thing about this stealthy shindig.

Rogue Ops uses a cool new stealth combat system. When you creep up on an enemy from behind a special danger icon appears, which has three different alert colours ranging from relatively safe (green) to extremely dangerous (red). If you choose to attack the enemy when the meter is green you have to perform a super-long random combo that appears on the screen the moment you press the assault button. And it's time-sensitive! So you have to complete the combo in a flash, much like in the Shenmue games, or the enemy will detect your presence.

If you're more daring and can get close enough to your prey so that the danger meter turns red, the combo you have to perform is far shorter and easier to nail. This adds an exciting twist to the otherwise standard affair of shooting foes with a silenced pistol and dragging them into the shadows.

It's not all about killing, though. It's often wise to keep an enemy alive so as not to draw attention to yourself, pickpocketing them for vital equipment and information instead.

Kemco is publishing this sexy sneak 'em up, and it's expected to creep onto UK shelves on December 5. Stay tuned for more on Nikki and her delightful derrière next issue.

Karaoke Stage

First look

THINK YOU CAN SING? YOU'RE 'AVING A LAUGH

This is what we're talking about. Full-on karaoke-fuelled madness in the comfort of your own home!

Karaoke Stage is coming exclusively to PS2 early next year. Once you've invited some mates round, slip on the headset and embarrass yourself with a wailing rendition of The Power Of Love, and then pass the gauntlet onto one of your cackling amigos to see if they can do any better.

Like most rhythm action games it's all in the timing. You've got to sing certain words for specific lengths, much like, well, singing. Anyway, we've played it (badly) and it's a blast. We'll be bringing you more on Konami's sing-along over the coming months.

Work your way through the single-player Career mode in search of pop stardom

TRIBES: VENGEANCE

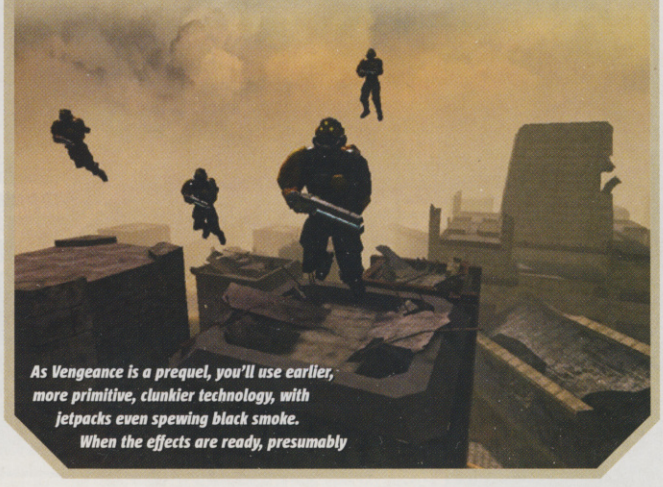
TRIBES: IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

UPDATE!

For a videogame narrative to remind us of one of our favourite movies sounds cool. To be reminded of two smacks of genius in the making.

As Irrational's Ken Levine explains, "Why do all games follow a straight beginning, middle and end chronology? We thought about movies like Pulp Fiction, where the camera tells the story as it wants to be told – going between different people, different times and different places." A bit like the De Niro classic Once Upon A Time in America.

"We focus on one family whose story spans 20 years, with the narrative going back and forth in time. Within this you play as six or seven different characters." Roll on 2004.



As Vengeance is a prequel, you'll use earlier, more primitive, clunkier technology, with jetpacks even spewing black smoke. When the effects are ready, presumably

Playtime Bullies

FIGHTING FOR SPACE ON THE OFFICE CONSOLE THIS MONTH

PS2 MOST PLAYED!

WINNING ELEVEN 7

Lunchtimes just wouldn't be lunchtimes without a game or two. Only problem is that two matches are never enough. That might account for the recent trend of lunch starting at 10.30am and finishing at 5.30pm.

XBOX MOST PLAYED!

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

We all love it, but it's taken over Alex's life. He's even started dressing up like a Jedi. He almost lost a testicle during a lightsaber demonstration using a mop, but that's just part of the danger of being a Jedi, he says...

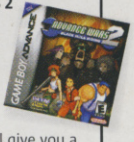
CUBE MOST PLAYED!

F-ZERO GX

Most of us had to pay at least one visit to the local eye clinic this month. Our lunchtimes have been spent caning the multiplayer where blinking simply isn't an option. Lee is now completely cross-eyed and keeps walking into doors.

GBA MOST PLAYED!

ADVANCE WARS 2



A man's link cable is sacred, and should be hidden away from thieving hands. Pinch Jaime's and he'll give you a nipple twist so hard that you'll weep for a week. See, no link cable means no four-way battle action! And that just won't do. No sir.

PC MOST PLAYED!

WOLFENSTEIN: ENEMY TERRITORY

Pete insists on plugging every member of the CVG team with at least a dozen headshots before we're allowed to go home. We're not sure what that's about, but we'd be lying if we said we didn't all love it... Okay, we're lying.

the HOT SEAT

Atsushi Inaba, producer of Viewtiful Joe blabs openly about his latest lunatic masterpiece and spills the beans on 2D gaming

Q CVG: Where did the idea for Viewtiful Joe come from?

A Atsushi: *A long time ago, in the 60s and 70s there were a lot of costume superhero shows. Basically this is where Joe comes from, but we also blended in typical American comic book heroes as well. So it's a blending of both cultures.*

Q CVG: Do you think that there's still a lot of room for game development within the much-neglected 2D genre?

A Atsushi: *Up until now we've played a lot of 2D games in the Nintendo and Super Nintendo era. We've seen it all and we've done it all with 2D. It's going to be hard to bring out new games that are original and fun. However with Viewtiful Joe we think we've been able to breath new life into the genre because we use it in a new, stylistic way that hasn't been used before. It would be possible for more 2D games to come out, but it's all going to depend on how imaginative the creators of the games can actually be.*

Q CVG: During the development process did you ever consider putting in a multiplayer option?

A Atsushi: *Yeah, we did think about it of course, but then when we realised the type of game it was, we realised it wouldn't have fit.*

Q CVG: What's your favourite thing about the game?

A Atsushi: *Of course I like the graphics and everything, but my favourite thing is that it's a game that you can watch people playing and yet it's still fun. You could be playing it, I could be watching, and I'd still have a good time watching you play. It's so cool to look at.*

Q CVG: Many games at the moment are very similar in terms of looks and gameplay. How do you feel about that?

A Atsushi: *There are no games out there right now that interest me, because they all seem the same. So I was really happy to get the chance to produce a game like Viewtiful Joe that actually did seem fresh and new.*

Q CVG: Was it a real challenge making the combat look chaotic while still keeping it easy to control?

A Atsushi: *If you're just going to make a regular action game with punching and kicking it would simply be the same old thing over and over again. So we really had to put a lot of effort into implementing the VFX abilities. Implementing the Slow, the Mach Speed and the Zoom to a point where it's actually fun to play – that was tough, yeah.*

Q CVG: Are you ever worried that people will think you're a bit strange for making games like Viewtiful Joe and Steel Battalion?

A Atsushi: *I don't really care if people think I'm strange or crazy. I like making fun, original and unique games. If that means that I'm going to be labelled as a crazy weird creator, label me.*

> *"I DON'T REALLY CARE IF PEOPLE THINK I'M CRAZY. I LIKE MAKING FUN GAMES"*

Q What's your opinion on sequels?

A Atsushi: *With the first game there are some things that we couldn't get in, that we wanted to put in. So we still have this feeling that it's not 100 per cent. So we want to try making a sequel, eventually. That's not official! However as you guys know, once you make a sequel you make another sequel, another sequel, and another one until you have tons of sequels – and that makes me yawn. I don't want to keep doing sequels – that's boring to me. I'd rather do something new.*

Viewtiful Joe blends frantic gameplay and cel-shading to blistering effect

RAZOR BLADES AT THE READY

Despite being about as much fun as catching your old fella in your zipper, Beyblade spins its way into second place on this month's sales chart just behind Eye Toy.

HALF-LIFE 2 Half-Life 2 has slipped from September 30 to some time in November. It's also expected that three different versions of the game will go on sale, each priced accordingly. One version is believed to be the single-player game, another to feature all the multiplayer modes and the third to be a deluxe edition.

BLACK TO THE FUTURE

DEATH, DECEPTION AND LOADSA DOSH IN VIVENDI'S BLACK9

The future's coming – and it doesn't look good. Black9 is set in 2080 and the fate of mankind is being decided by a titanic struggle between nine elite factions.

But hey, you've got to make a living. You play a mercenary cashing in on the situation, making a quick buck by pimping your ass-kicking skills to the highest bidder.

Black9 is more complex than that though. It's concentrating as much on RPG-style character development as blasting the snot out of stuff.

Thankfully, this melding of genres isn't just a token gesture. You'll be able to develop your character's skills, purchase high-tech weaponry and hone your body with cybernetic upgrades.

You'll also have complete control over your character's speciality. Do you want to be a roughneck assault trooper with the biggest guns on the block? Or will you use stealth and deception to achieve your goals?

And as the conflict escalates your choices and the narrative will force you to make hard decisions about where your allegiances actually lie.

It sounds like a great concept and it's presented in a slick third-person viewpoint with more than a hint of the old Halo about it.

Black9 will be appearing on PC, PS2 and Xbox and you'll be able to join the fray later this autumn.

FACTION-PACKED

Since Black9 has nine different forces battling each other, there's heaps of scope for plenty of cool close encounters.

1. **Aliens:** The aliens are huge and could crush your nads with their pinkies. Erk!
2. **Robots:** Massive ED-209-style mechs with spindly legs and gigantic guns... Don't even think about it. Run!
3. **Humans:** The good old humans are struggling just to bring home the bacon. You can decide to join any of these factions or change sides when it suits you best.

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

Konami has confirmed that Gradius V will be coming to PS2 in Europe. The next gen hardcore shooter will feature horizontally scrolling action, but all the ships and enemies will be modelled in 3D. It's out in 2004.

Dr Fox hosted last month's PlayStation Experience at Earls Court, where Pop Idol on PS2 was one of the major hits. Queues of kids lined up to take the stage and show their skills on the big screen. It's looking good and is bound to be a Christmas smash. Don't miss our full playtest next issue.

GOLDEN JOYSTICKS 2003

It's that time of year again when you get the chance to have your say on what you reckon are this year's best games. Simply log onto www.goldenjoysticks.co.uk to cast your vote.

computer and video games GOLDEN JOYSTICK™ AWARDS 2003

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ARMED AND DANGEROUS

ALL-NEW SCREENS

ROMAN: TOTAL WAR

Your frozen buddy needs saving from the icy weather. Do you a) give him your jacket; b) cuddle up for body warmth; or c) stick him head-first up a dinosaur's arse? Take a wild guess. And if that's how Armed & Dangerous' hero Roman and sidekicks treat their friends, you don't want to be their enemy.

LucasArts' third-person carnage fest is a tongue-in-cheek affair – imagine an unholy hybrid of Brute Force with Sam & Max humour. This explosive third-person shooter's large, sprawling levels are packed with destructible buildings and power-ups such as jetpacks that open up new areas and tactics.

You'll switch between offensive and defensive missions too, blowing up peasants' hovels on foot in one level, then manning a moving gun position to save a base from assaulting grunts in the next. It's a real blast – out on Xbox and PC in February.

FRYING TONIGHT!
Did we mention the explosions? There's plenty. Huge ones. All the time.

FIRE IN THE HOLE!
The biggest Muzzle Flash Ever award goes to Roman, the show-off!

FISH FOOD!
Land sharks – one of the many real-life weapons in your arsenal. Mmm. Tasty.

EA SPORTS FIFA SOCCER 2004

FIFA 2004 ON GBA!

We all like to play with the balls in our pocket. That's if they're footballs and they're on our GBA, of course.

Sensing this desire, EA is bringing out the latest instalment in its FIFA series for Nintendo's handheld. Expected to feature FIFA's unique blend of gameplay, it looks set to be a smash. EA has also confirmed that it will be taking advantage of the GameCube/GBA connectivity, with Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto on hand as a design consultant.

As usual, all the teams and players are fully licensed

No info yet on what features will make the GBA version...

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Director's Feature Length Commentary

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CHART HITS

32384 Radiohead, Go To Sleep
32417 Girls Aloud, Life Got Cold
32041 Busted, Sleeping..the Light On
32412 Richard X v. Kelis, Dreams
32631 R. Kelly ft. Big Tigger, Snake
32644 Kings Of Leon, Chambers
32445 Jaimeson, Complete
31987 Blu Cantrell ft. S.Paul, Breathe
32413 Cheeky Girls, Cheeky Holiday
32425 Lumidee, Never Leave You
32419 Pharrell ft. Method, Frontin'
32373 R.William, Something Beautiful
32564 Jason Nevins, I'm In Heaven
31254 Beyonce. JayZ, Crazy In Love
32449 Benny Benassi, Satisfaction
31259 Evanescene, Bring Me To Life
32416 Craig David, Spanish
32424 Deepest Blue, Deepest Blue
32583 Elbow, Fallen Angel
31328 Pink, Feel Good Time
32369 Javine, Real Things
31318 Eminem, Business
32563 All American Rejects, Swing
25105 21 Questions
31293 Delta Goodrem, Without You
31998 Misteeq, Can't Get It Back
32430 Joe Budden, Pump It Up
32626 Funeral For A Friend, Juneau
32386 D-Side, Invisible
32375 Junior Senior, Rhythm Bandits
32609 O. Osbourne, Close My Eyes
32448 Dido, White Flag
32496 The Cardigans, The Storm
32421 Macy Gray, She Aint Right...
32402 Madonna, Frozen
32399 Dido, Take My Hand

TV & FILM

23201 A Team
23202 Addams Family
23203 Airwolf
23204 Austin Powers
23205 Banana Splits
23209 Bob The Builder
23218 Eastenders
23220 ET
23221 Friends
25156 Futurama
23222 Ghostbusters
23223 Godfather
23224 Good, Bad And The Ugly
23226 Great Escape
23228 Halloween
23229 Harry Potter
23232 Indiana Jones
23234 Jackass
23235 James Bond
23243 Lord Of The Rings
23246 Match Of The Day
23247 Matrix
23249 Mission Impossible
23250 M.Python, The Bright Side
23253 Muppet Show
23254 Only Fool And Horses
23255 Pink Panther
23256 Pulp Fiction
23258 Rocky, Eye Of The Tiger
25116 Roobarb & Custard
23259 Scooby Doo
23260 Simpsons
23261 Smpsns, Itchy & Scrtchy
23262 Six Feet Under
23265 Southpark, Kyles Mom
23268 Star Wars
23269 Terminator Theme
25198 Top Gun

23002 C
23008 D
23009 D
23011 E
23014 I.
23016 Ja
23024 N
23029 R
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13198 Af
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13243 Bo
13205 Bu
13097 Do
13168 Gho
13221 Golden Axe
13222 Gradius
13226 Mario Bros., Level 1
18758 Mario Sun, Delfino Plaza
13275 Mario World, Intro
13985 OutRun, Magical Shower
13987 Pac Man
13278 Sonic, Hill Zone
13254 Street Fighter II, Title
13228 Tetris
13134 Wonderboy

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Chart Attack

CVG MOST WANTED

1. KILLZONE (PS2)

Mike: "It looks every bit as amazing as Halo 2, but grittier! I'm certain it's going to become a global superstar. Plus it's online!"

2. MANHUNT (PS2)

Alex: "Any game where you can suck the life out of enemies using only a plastic bag sounds right up our street."

3. HALO 2 (XBOX)

Graeme: "Next year is going to be a stunner for shooter fans, but you're going to need an Xbox for the ultimate blaster."

4. HALF-LIFE 2 (PC)

Pete: "Every time I see it, I'm even more blown away. Never mind game of the year, this could be game of the century!"

5. PRINCE OF PERSIA (PS2, PC)

Lee: "Swinging like a monkey, fighting like a gladiator – this game is *all* of my fantasies rolled into one. Dribble."

READER'S MOST WANTED

He's as big as a bus. André 'The Giant' Mcleod lets us in on the five games he's most itching to play.

1. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 (PS2)
"Like a tank demolishing everything that dares stray in its path."

2. MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH (GC)
"The original thrashes the pretenders to its throne."

3. DOOM 3 (PC)
"Blood, guts and that's only the fight for the keyboard."

4. ALIAS (PS2)
"Ms Bristow can whip my behind any day she likes."

5. KNIGHTS OF HONOR (PC)
"A twinkle in the eyes of the developers – this one's got so much potential it's not true."

Send CVG a photo of yourself and list of five games you're most excited about playing, plus 10 words on each telling us why.
READER'S MOST WANTED, CVG, DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD., 30 CLEVELAND STREET, LONDON, W1T 4JD. EMAIL: MAILBAG.CVG@DENNIS.CO.UK (SUBJECT: READER'S MOST WANTED)

GAME MULTI-FORMAT TOP SELLERS

1	EyeToy: Play	PS2
2	FIFA 2003	PS2, XB, GC, PC, PS
3	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	PS2, XB
4	Beyblade: Let It Rip	PS
5	LOTR: The Two Towers	PS2, XB, GC, GBA
6	Tomb Raider: AOD	PS2, PC
7	Pokémon Sapphire	GBA
8	The Great Escape	PS2, XB
9	Pokémon Ruby	GBA
10	James Bond 007: Nightfire	PS2, XB, GC, PC

Viewtiful Joe come from?

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Steel Battalion?

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RELEASE DATES

XBOX	FREEDOM FIGHTERS	SEP 26
PC	NAPOLEON	SEP 26
PC	ESCHELON 2: WIND WARRIORS	SEP 26
GBA, GC	STARSKY & HUTCH	SEP 26
PS2, XBOX, GC, PC	MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER	SEP 26
XBOX, PS2, GC	SOUL CALIBUR II	SEP 26
GBA	KIRBY: NIGHTMARE IN DREAMLAND	SEP 26
XBOX	WALLACE AND GROMIT	SEP 26
PC, XBOX	DRAGON'S LAIR 3D	SEP 26
XBOX, PS2	RUN LIKE HELL	SEP 26
XBOX, GC	GLADIUS	SEP 26
PS2	YU-GI-OH! DUELIST OF THE ROSES	SEP 26
PC	COMMANDOS 3: DESTINATION BERLIN	SEP 26
XBOX	GROUP S CHALLENGE	SEP 26
XBOX	CURSE: THE EYE OF ISIS	SEP 26
PS2	THE HOBBIT	SEP 26
XBOX, GC, PC, GBA, PS2	FINDING NEMO	SEP 26
PC	HOMEWORLD 2	SEP 26
PC, PS2	WARHAMMER 40,000: FIREWARRIOR	SEP 26
XBOX, PC, PS2, GC	TIGER WOODS 2004	SEP 26
XBOX	DISNEY'S HAUNTED MANSION	SEP 26
PC	SIM CITY: RUSH HOUR EXPANSION PACK	SEP 26
XBOX, PS2, PC, GC	NHL 2004	SEP 26
PC	SPACE COLONY	SEP 26
PC	MASSIVE ASSAULT	SEP 26
PS2	FREEDOM: SOLDIERS OF LIBERTY	SEP 26
PC	TIME OF DEFIANCE	SEP 26
PC	COMMAND & CONQUER GENERALS ZERO HOUR	SEP 26
PS2	AMPLITUDE	SEP 26
PS2	EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES	SEP 26
PC	QUAD ASSAULT: WEST FRONT	SEP 26
GBA	DUAL BLADES	SEP 29
PC	HALF-LIFE 2	SEP 20
PC	SOLDNER – SECRET WARS	OCT
PC	POP IDOL	OCT 1
PC	EMPIRES: DAWN OF THE MODERN WORLD	OCT 1
PC	AGE OF MYTHOLOGY: THE TITANS	OCT
PC	YU-GI-OH! POWER OF CHAOS 1	OCT 1
PC	YU-GI-OH! POWER OF CHAOS 2	OCT 1
PC	YU-GI-OH! POWER OF CHAOS 3	OCT 1
PC	MAX PAYNE: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE	OCT 1
PC	TUROK EVOLUTION	OCT 1
PC	SPELL FORCE	OCT 1
PC	NEVERWINTER NIGHTS ADD-ON 2	OCT 1
GBA	NEED FOR SPEED: PORSCHE UNLEASHED	OCT 3
PS2, GBA	ROBOCOP	OCT 3
PS2	CURSE	OCT 3
PC	LOCK ON: MODERN AIR COMBAT	OCT 3
GC	WALLACE & GROMIT	OCT 3
PS2	TEMPLAR	OCT 3
XBOX	URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER	OCT 3
PS2	GLADIATOR: SWORD OF VENGEANCE	OCT 3
GC, PC	GALIDOR: DEFENDERS OF THE OUTER DIMENSION	OCT 3
GC	WWE WRESTLEMANIA X9	OCT 3
XBOX	TETRIS ONLINE	OCT 3
PC	RAVEN SHIELD: ATHENA SWORD ADD-ON	OCT 3
PC	MEDAL OF HONOR ALLIED ASSAULT: BREAKTHROUGH	OCT 3
GC	DROME RACERS	OCT 10
PC	HALO	OCT 10
PS2	BARBARIAN	OCT 10
PS2	EVOLUTION SNOWCROSS	OCT 10
GC	MERCEDES-BENZ WORLD RACING	OCT 10
PS2	BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER	OCT 10
PS2	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON	OCT 10
PS2, PC	URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER	OCT 10
GC	XGRA	OCT 10
PS2	BATTLESTAR GALACTICA	OCT 10
PS2	BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS	OCT 10
XBOX	WWE RAW 2	OCT 10
PC	KOREA: FORGOTTEN CONFLICT	OCT 10
PC	X2: THE THREAT	OCT 10
PC	NBA LIVE 2004	OCT 10
GC, XBOX, PC	BIONCILE: THE GAME	OCT 10
PC	NO MAN'S LAND	OCT 17
GBA	SUPER MARIO BROS 3: SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4	OCT 17
GBA, XBOX	BARBARIAN	OCT 17
GC, PS2, GC	STAR WARS ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE	OCT 17
PC, GC	FIFA 2004	OCT 17
XBOX, PS2	NBA LIVE 2004	OCT 17
PS2	BIONCILE: THE GAME	OCT 17
PS2	MEGAMAN X7	OCT 17
GBA	FINAL FANTASY TACTICS	OCT 24
GC	BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS	OCT 24
PS2, XBOX	SSX3	OCT 24
GC	F-ZERO GX	OCT 31
PC	COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO	OCT 31
PS1, PS2 XBOX, GBA	FIFA 2004	OCT 31
XBOX, PC, GC, GBA	QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP	OCT 31
PC	THE SIMS MAKIN' MAGIC (EXPANSION PACK)	OCT 31
PC	WORMS 3D	OCT 31

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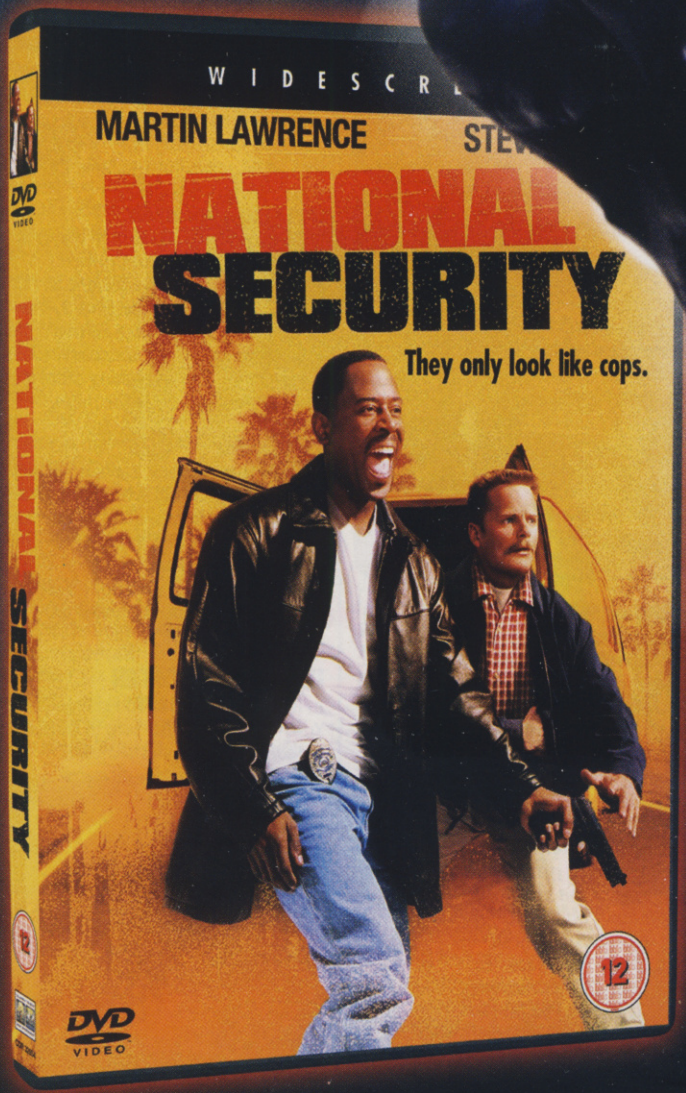
OFF THE FORCE AND ON COURSE FOR TROUBLE



FANTASTIC SPECIAL FEATURES:

Alternative Ending - 'Colm Battles Martin & Steve'

Director's Feature Length Commentary

2 Deleted Scenes 'Interrogation' & 'Overhead Hallway'

Disturbing The Peace Music Video

National Security Theatrical Trailer

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Postal 2? I'll give you postal too if we go out on strike again...

MAILBAG

Send your rantings and ravings (or a letter) to: Mailbag, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD. Or email us at mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

Revealed: the secret of attracting more female gamers

SCHIZO TENDENCIES

I don't think Nintendo will reveal any further details about Mario 128 before its release, so to find out whether it's any good or not, you'll have to go and buy it. However, knowing Nintendo, I'm confident Mario 128 will be brilliant and well worth the wait.

Devraj, Dorset

CVG *Not that you're biased or prejudging it in any way.*

GAME GIRLS

Why are Game Boys called Game Boys? This is very sexist. They're not just for boys. Girls should have equal rights. Bring on the Game Girls.

Abbie, Shrewsbury

SCHLOCK HORROR

Was 'Rex Nebula And The Cosmic Gender Blender' (Issue 263 Mailbag) inspired by The Rocky Horror Show? If they released a game called that now, I'd buy it based on the title alone.

Dr Frank N Furter

HALO RELOADED

I was talking with a friend of mine and the subject of a Halo movie came up. We agreed that Vin Diesel would fit the profile and make an excellent Master Chief. But then we thought we don't actually know if Master Chief is black or white. If he was black, we thought Wesley Snipes would be a praiseworthy choice. What are your thoughts?

Adam Smith, Essex

CVG *Or maybe it's a butch girl super-soldier, in which case we'd go for Carrie-Anne Moss (The Matrix Reloaded's Trinity) or Grace Jones (A View To A Kill's May Day). She may be getting on a bit for Bond movies, but she could still kick Halle Berry's butt in a bare knuckle fight.*

GRAND THEFT MORE-TO

All I want to know is will the next GTA be on PS2 or PS3?

Lloyd, County Down

CVG *We reckon Rockstar'll squeeze one more out on PS2, though you can imagine the kind of juicy bonuses they'll have been promised to have a brand new GTA game ready for PS3's launch line-up. Or Xbox 2's for that matter.*

GUEST LETTER

More strange debris drifting into CVG's straining Mailbag

WHACKED OUT

Me and my crew wuz wondering if you'd like to fly by my crib because it's so whack. What's that? My crib's not whack? Stand back cuz I'm going to bust some caps. What's that you said about my Momma? She's thick? Yo Bobby, CVG says my Momma's thick? What's that Bobby? You're agreeing? Stand back again, CVG, I'm gonna to pop this guy.

Michael, Stoke-On-Trent

CVG *Last time we saw someone pick a fight with themselves was watching Fight Club. Either way, we're not coming within five miles of your house. Ever. Not even if it's on fire.*

YOU'VE BEEN...

Tango straaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaange sodaaaaaaa!!!!

titface69, via email

CVG *Seems like a nice boy.*

I'LL BE BACH

I've recently seen Terminator 3. It was great and I want to know if there'll be a game version on PS2.

Matthew, Norfolk

CVG *As sure as a tempestuous toilet follows a meat feast pizza, so the game of the movie follows all big blockbusters these days. Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines is out on PS2 in November, and the storyline weaves in with the movie's. An added bonus is that it will feature exclusively shot celluloid footage of Mr 'Aahl be bark' himself.*

ALL THE WAY TO THE SIM BANK

Does anyone else think Maxis is seriously taking the piss with The Sims? If you wanted the complete version of the game you'd have to shell out for seven games, and now they're bringing out The Sims 2! What are we? Stoopid?

Llady Llink, via email

PS. The Bulgarian Quidditch player is Viktor Krum, not Victor Crum.

CVG *Actually, there's eight on PC alone, not counting The Sims 2, the canned Online or Deluxe Edition – and then there are all the console versions. They wouldn't keep making them if there wasn't a market for them.*

AGE RAGE

Why do they put age limits on games? I know a six-year-old with GTA 3 which has an 18 certificate, and I've got three 15 certificate games. What's the point?

Robert, Doncaster

CVG *Yeah, and why not let six-year-olds watch porn movies too while you're at it?*

UP YER SPHINX-TER

In Issue 263, Deathblade claimed that Yugi has lost once to Seto in Duelist Kingdom. Wrong! In the newer episodes, Egyptian Marik mind-controls Joey Wheeler and forces

Roaming free in Marty's undercrackers this month

CVG STINKER

KING SKIDDY

Don't you hate pants?

Marty, via email

No, pants rock. Only filthy freaks go commando. We don't even want to think what the inside of your trousers look like after a long trip to Silent Hill.

Yugi to battle him, and Yugi loses on purpose! Also, Deathblade claims Exodia is the strongest card in the game. Wrong again! Kaiba's tournament is held so he can get the Egyptian God Cards, which are stronger than even Exodia. Get your homework done!
Naomi, via email

UNCOOPERATIVE MODE

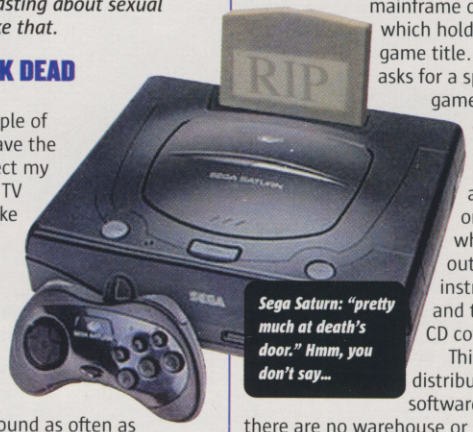
Xbox Live may be fantastic but you can't get much better than having a few mates around to have a laugh on SmackDown! or Pro Evo. I don't see the point in going online and playing with people you don't even know, especially in games where you have to cooperate like Resi Outbreak – I'd be tempted to shoot them all! I'm sure GT4 will be the exception because it's a racing game. If a football game goes online I think it's bound to be a fantastic experience, but I just can't see myself cooperating with people online who are complete strangers.
Carlo Scattini, London

FOOKING ROBBISH

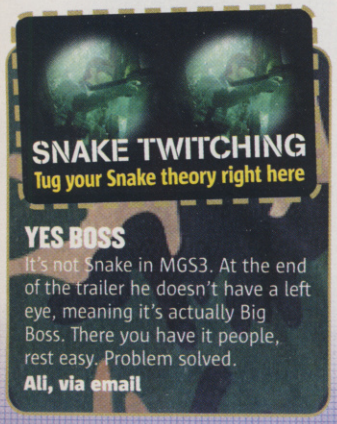
Will there be a Bo' Selecta game coming out for PS2? That would be cracker. Bring back the Bear!
The Village Bicycle (everyone's had a ride), via email
CVG *We're not exactly sure you should be boasting about sexual proclivities like that.*

DEATHTANK DEAD SHOCKER

Me and a couple of friends still have the urge to connect my Saturn to the TV and slip in Duke Nukem 3D so we can play Lobotomy's awesome DeathTank Zwei. The trouble is my so-called friends ain't round as often as I'd like, and my old Saturn is pretty much at death's door *[Dead as a doornail, we'd say]*. So is there any chance of seeing this truly remarkable game on any of our present consoles or PC with online play?
Luke, via email
CVG *Your friends might come around a bit more if you upgraded your prehistoric console. Something from the steam age or later perhaps.*



Sega Saturn: "pretty much at death's door." Hmm, you don't say...



YES BOSS

It's not Snake in MGS3. At the end of the trailer he doesn't have a left eye, meaning it's actually Big Boss. There you have it people, rest easy. Problem solved.
Ali, via email

Multiplayer's moved on a long way since then too, so the best you could hope for was some unlockable homage in Duke Nukem Forever, and as the joke goes, we've been waiting forever for that one...

COULDA, SHOULDA, OUGHTA

Nintendo should have made a graphically enhanced version of Ocarina Of Time instead of just releasing the old version free with The Wind Waker. Look at what this move did for Resident Evil.
Matt H, Kent

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

Game publishers rattle on about pirate software costing the industry millions of pounds a year, and the cost being passed on to the consumer. Isn't there some other way? How about this – every game store is connected to one mainframe computer which holds every game title. A customer asks for a specific game, the shop assistant instantly downloads and burns it onto a disc while printing out the instructions and the CD cover. This cuts out distribution of the software, plus there are no warehouse or transportation costs. Of course, the next step would be to cut out the game shops and have everyone download and burn games straight from a broadband connection!
Vince, via email
CVG *Well done, you've just described a system that was being piloted in UK games stores three years ago (and featured in CVG no less), while Sony announced that soon we'd be downloading movies and videos and even games onto our console hard drives as part of the Digital Entertainment Network. When? When they unveiled PS2. Like many great ideas, you have to wait for the rest of the world to catch up.*

RETURN OF THE PLUG

I recently was lucky enough to have played Return Of The King at the PlayStation Experience in London. The good news is, it's so good it's unbelievable. The whole thing reeks of quality, everything is polished to perfection – including the menu system. There's no slowdown, no matter how many orcs you're sending back to the shadows with a swipe of cold steel and the crystal clear graphics are bursting with excellent animations. This game is ace! BUY IT YOU PATHETIC HUMAN WEAKLINGS!
Saruman, The Tower of Orthanc, Isengard, Middle-Earth, ME13 2IJ
CVG *Glad to see Isengard has its very own postcode now.*

computer and video games
STAR LETTER

STAR LETTER

The proper position for pumping one out

LAST TIME

In your article on Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time, you express delight with the rewind feature, and wonder where it appears in other games. Though Blinx might have something similar, the ability to rewind time was implemented cleverly and stylishly (through a Fabergé timepiece) in The Last Express. The man behind that 1997 project? Someone named Jordan Mechner.
Wei Kiat, via email
CVG *Who was, of course, one of the brains behind the original Prince Of Persia and consultant on Sands Of Time. Well spotted.*

JOYTECH®

Each month's star letter-writer gets some quality peripherals from JOYTECH, so make sure you mark your name and address clearly!

WINNER

SOAPBOX

JUST BIN IT!

If you overlooked the dated graphics and crappy Story mode, WWF No Mercy on the N64 can easily compete with today's wrestling games. Location-specific damage, weight classes, unique attributes, hidden legends and multiple grapple types were all pioneered years ago in No Mercy. So why have WWE games taken backwards steps over the last five years? Maybe it's because there's no competition. EA has the FIFA rights, but Konami keeps them on their toes with PES. The WWE should share the rights between two companies to ensure top quality games every time.
Tyler, Middlesex
CVG *Old game features being reused in new games? Preposterous idea. Next thing you'll be suggesting THQ dumps the poorer-scoring Raw and Wrestlemania brands and simply puts SmackDown! out on all formats...*

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

WORLD'S FIRST IN-DEPTH PLAYTEST!

EXCLUSIVE FIRST VERDICT ON THE PHATTEST NEW GAME ON THE BLOCK!

Skateboarding's not about freshly groomed professionals making millions of dollars every year.

Skateboarding's about the street. It's about rough tarmac, it's about ragged metal railings. It's about the grit in the graze you get when you faceplant into a ramp.

It's about the underground. And in THUG, it's all about you. Having shown us the high life of the skateboarding pro, Activision's next instalment in the Tony Hawk's series is going back to its roots.

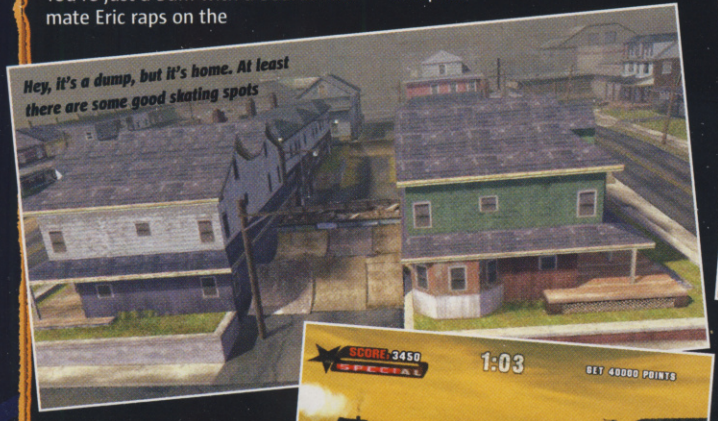
There's no doubt that THUG is going to be the hottest and most realistic extreme sports game ever. Since we like to keep our ears to the streets here at CVG, we got the drop on the gritty world of the underground. It ain't pretty, but it's keeping it real.

GOIN' UNDERGROUND

So you wanna be a pro skater? Live large, big house, five cars? Well, know this – you've got to work for it.

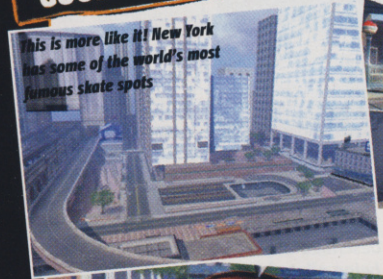
In the other Tony Hawk's games you had the luxury of skating venues with pristine lines and shiny ramps. THUG makes you work for it through a story mode. You're not a pro. You're just a bum with a board. Your mate Eric raps on the window, telling you that pro skater Chad Muska is coming to town. If you could show him your skills you might get a ticket out of this joint.

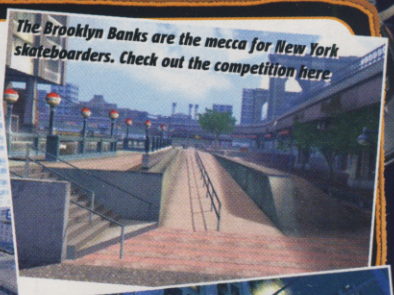
This time out you're playing to make your name on the circuit. You'll need to get sponsored by making a video of your dope skills in New York, get yourself known on the amateur circuit, and then work your way up to the pros.

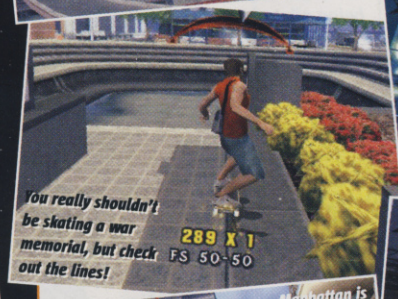

Hey, it's a dump, but it's home. At least there are some good skating spots

Catch some wicked air outside the high school and check out the lines of the new skate set-up

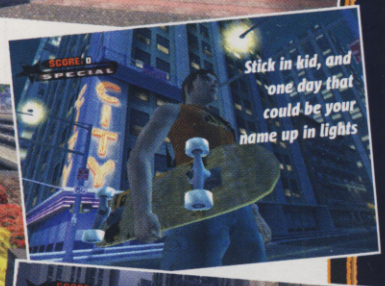
GOOD IN THE HOOD


This is more like it! New York has some of the world's most famous skate spots


The Brooklyn Banks are the mecca for New York skateboarders. Check out the competition here

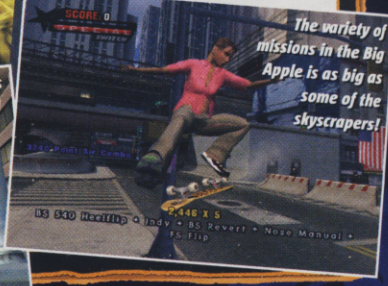


You really shouldn't be skating a war memorial, but check out the lines!



Stick in kid, and one day that could be your name up in lights

Manhattan is absolutely loaded with some truly awesome lines. Bust a flip trick over the subway!



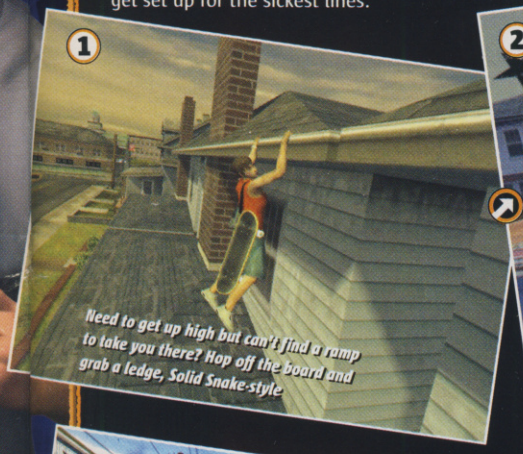
The variety of missions in the Big Apple is as big as some of the skyscrapers!

WALK AND ROLL

So walking wears down your new kicks, but you can't skate everywhere. Sometimes you've got to pick up the board to find the best lines.

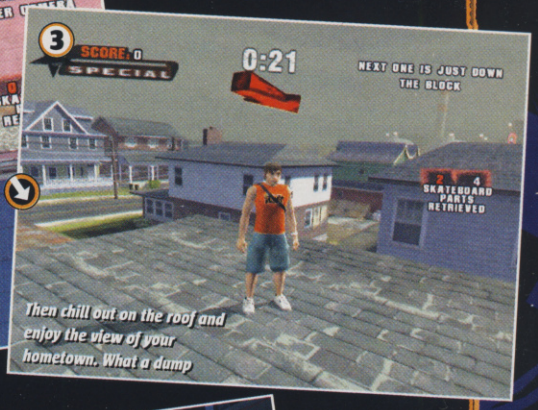
For the first time, THUG lets you hop off your board and explore on foot. It works even better than we'd hoped – just a tap of both shoulder buttons together gets your soles onto terra firma. You're then free to run around as much as you want and you can even clamber up walls, shimmy along ledges, and jump across gaps to get set up for the sickest lines.

But it's not just so you can go for a stroll. If you're in the middle of a huge combo and you've come to the end of your line, just hop off your board. A little clock appears, telling you how long you have before your combo expires. Once you've found a rail, jump straight into a grind and keep on trickin' to rack up monster scores! Like a manual or a revert, it's another way to link your combinations together and offers another new skill for even the most experienced skaters to master. Just think of the sick scores!



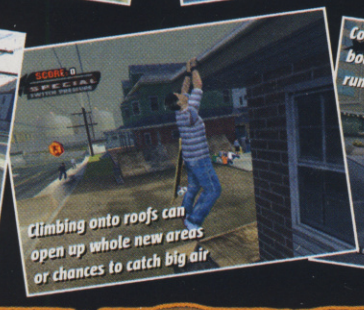
Need to get up high but can't find a ramp to take you there? Hop off the board and grab a ledge, Solid Snake-style

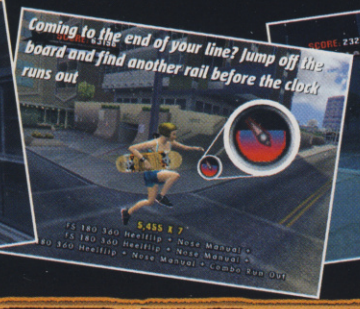
Clamber up to get to bonus pickups and secret areas

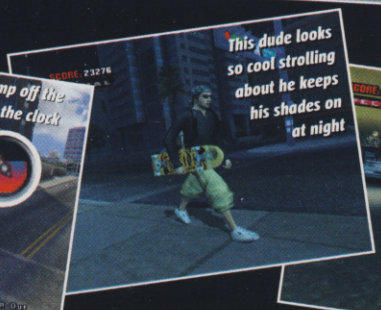


Then chill out on the roof and enjoy the view of your hometown. What a dump

Getting off your board and hoofing it can get you to the dopest skate spots easily


Climbing onto roofs can open up whole new areas or chances to catch big air

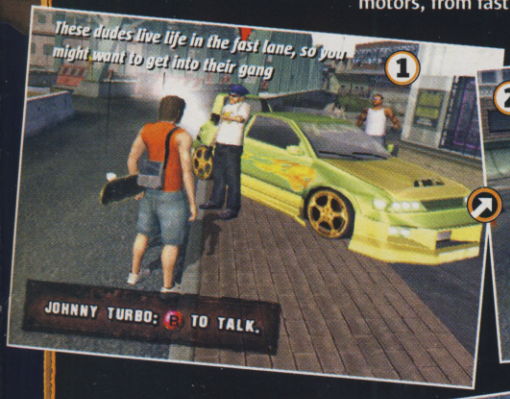

Coming to the end of your line? Jump off the board and find another rail before the clock runs out


This dude looks so cool strolling about he keeps his shades on at night

Getting off your board's handy when you need to get somewhere quick

GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNIN'

Getting off your board isn't the only new mode of transport in THUG. For the first time you can hop into a car! There's a nice variety of motors, from fast an' the furious-style street racers to scabby old bangers. They play a big part in a lot of the missions, and while the handling isn't going to worry Gran Turismo, it makes a nice change from skating everywhere.

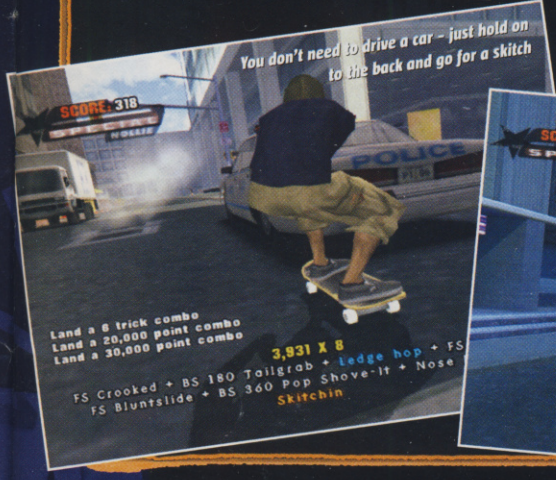


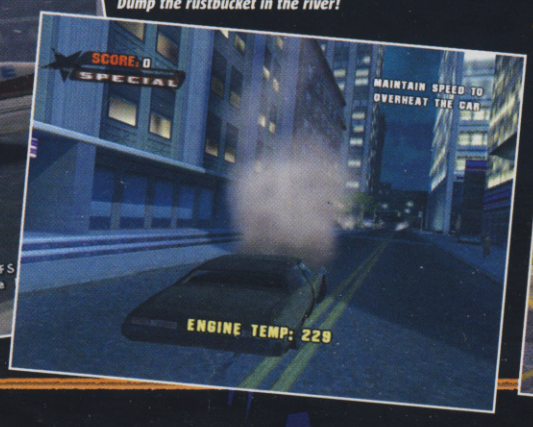
You'll need to prove you can handle a turbo-charged motor as well as a skateboard

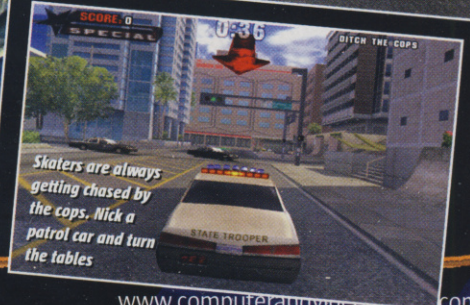
This piece of junk's about to blow a gasket. Dump the rustbucket in the river!

Just cos you're in a car doesn't mean you can't catch some air!

Later on you can use the Street Warriors car in missions







Skaters are always getting chased by the cops. Nick a patrol car and turn the tables

YOUR SKATE CAREER STARTS HERE

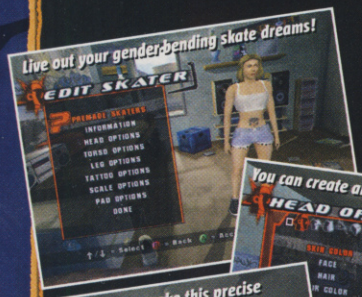
It may have Tony's name on the box but the fifth game in the unstoppable Tony Hawk series is really YOUR skate adventure. You'll already know all about how you can play as a digitised version of yourself in the game (if not check out the Scanning For Life Forms box below and stop living under that rock!). What you might not know is that THUG is the most customisable skateboarding sim yet. Check out how, here, with CVG's guide to personalising your own skate career.

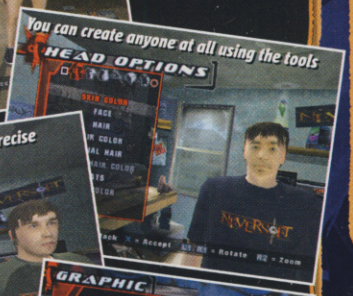
GET TRENDY ON THE CHEAP

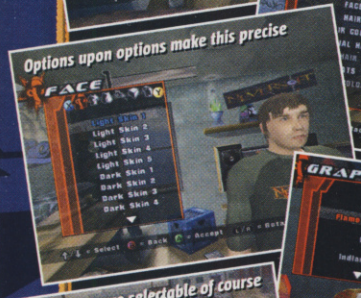
The Create-A-Skater mode is bursting at the seams with more street and skatewear than a Vans manufacturing plant. You can also dress yourself up with tons of accessories and haircuts.

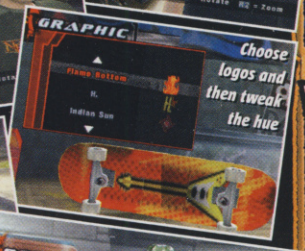
But before you start calling us sissy boys, we're talking about slick tattoos and sweet Oakley sunglasses, chunky metal chains and ultra cool record bags. There are loads of boards available at the skate shop and you can even morph individual muscle groups like forearms, biceps, thighs and your chest to give you that gym-fit physique you know your girlfriend wants you to have. You can even spite her by giving yourself a beer belly!

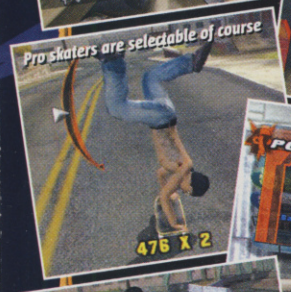
The wealth of options to tweak to help you truly create a skateboarding alter ego for yourself is amazing, and coupled with the ability to get your face in the game on PS2, this should help make THUG one of the most immersive and realistic sports games you're likely to play in a long while.

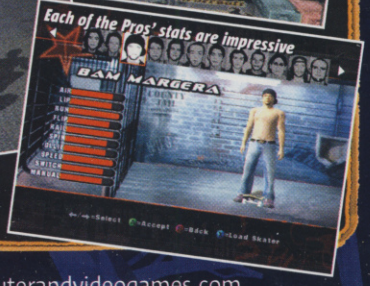






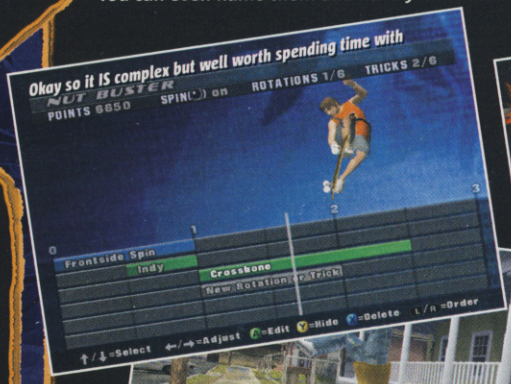


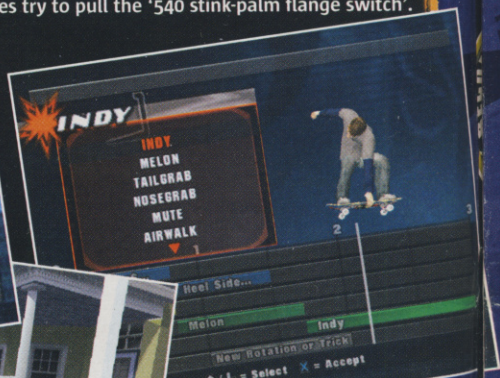


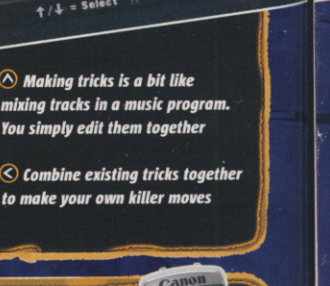


TURN TRICKS, BEE-YATCH!

If your skate career is ever going to get off the ground you need to stop imitating the same old moves any old schmoe can pull and start innovating with some spunky new creations of your own. At certain points in the game, your in-game skating mentors give you the chance to exhibit some true genius. By using already existing moves and stringing them together, tweaking the timing, gravity and balance required to pull them off, you can have skaters all over the world trying to pull your very own tricks. You can even name them and have your mates try to pull the '540 stink-palm flange switch'.







Making tricks is a bit like mixing tracks in a music program. You simply edit them together

Combine existing tricks together to make your own killer moves

SCANNING FOR LIFEFORMS

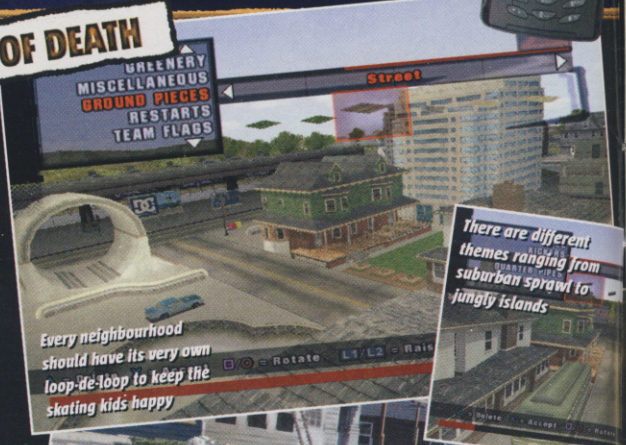
PS2 owners get by far the best features in THUG, in the form of online play and the ability to scan your own face into the game. It's not complicated, and you can save yourself the bother of 'jacking in to the mainframe' (maaan) and get Neversoft to do it for you.

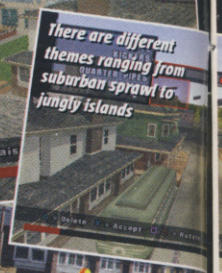
Take a still digital photo of your face using any digital means, including mobile phones, and simply email it to a special address. Within a minute (so says Neversoft, at any rate) you'll receive a password on your online PS2 that you feed into the game to create a skin of your face. You can then edit and tweak it to perfection. At the time of going to press, Neversoft's servers had seemingly exploded so we couldn't test it out. We'll update you as soon as we have!

CVG'S SKATE PARK OF DEATH

Designing your own skate park isn't a new feature for Tony Hawk games. But the level of detail and the range of obstacles, berms, ramps, loops and, er, flagpoles you can place in your arena is incredible.

What IS new for THUG is the way you can now place goals and challenges in your park. These range from placing 'S-K-A-T-E' and 'C-O-M-B-O' letters to setting high score challenges. It's so easy; a mollusc could knock together an impressive park in no time at all, supposing that molluscs had hands to hold the pad. Who knows what wonders you can create after a flagon of Tizer?

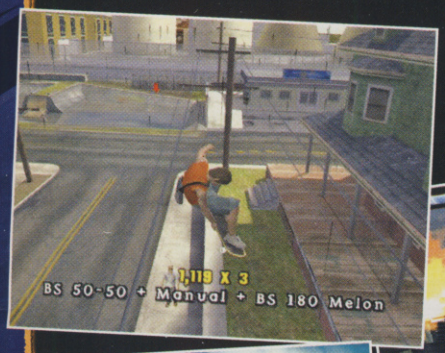




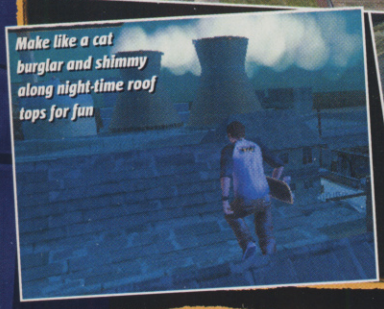
720° SIAN LLOYD

New for THUG is the passing of time as you play and far more natural-looking weather effects.

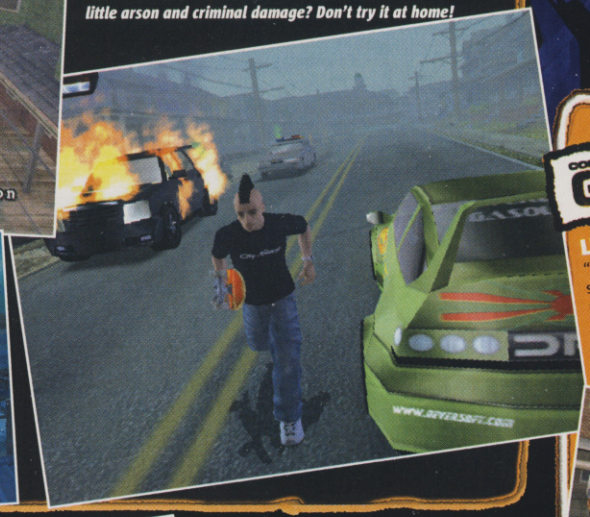
The flow of time is tied to the number of missions you've cleared in an area, and sadly not a natural real-time progression. This is because certain missions have to be performed at the correct time of day, like sneaking around New Jersey without getting spotted by a rival skate gang. Weather is mainly a cosmetic addition – it's not any harder to skate in the wet – but it does help bring the game back to reality.



Rain effects are pretty but it would have been nice if water made conditions more treacherous for skating



Make like a cat burglar and shimmy along night-time roof tops for fun

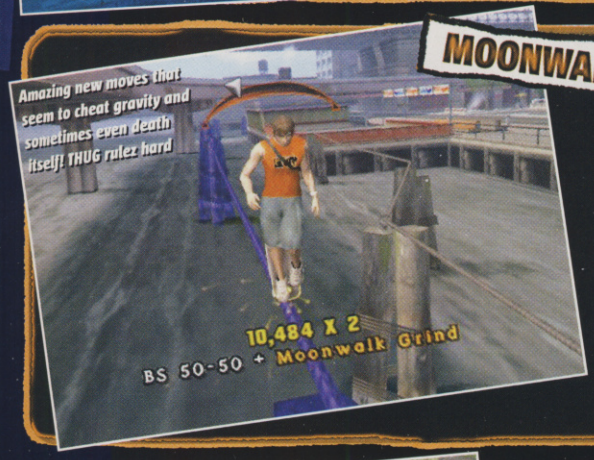


What better way to pass the dusky hours than with a little arson and criminal damage? Don't try it at home!

GRIND THE RUMOUR MILL

Activision reps are staying tight-lipped about online PS2 play. What we CAN tell you is that all of the original games so popular in Tony 4 will feature, such as Graffiti, Capture The Flag and Trick Attack, and that new games WILL be included in THUG. As to what these are we can only dream at the moment as the publisher wants to reward fans by surprising them with ace new modes. At the top of our wish list for online play is an increased number of players in each competition, hopefully making THPS4's four-player games look like old news.

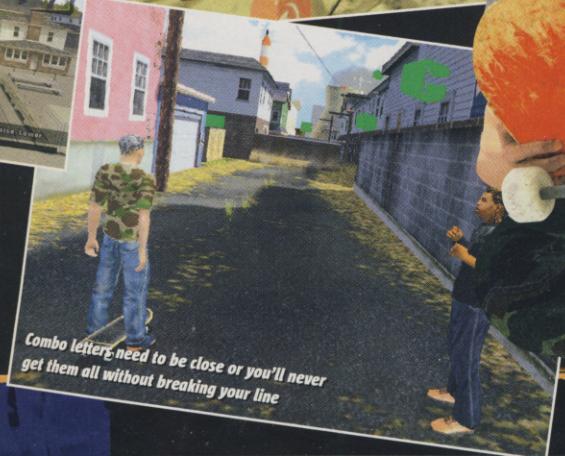
MOONWALKING ON SUNSHINE



Amazing new moves that seem to cheat gravity and sometimes even death itself! THUG rulez hard

In addition to creating your own tricks, there are some real doozies already programmed into the game. As in other Hawk's games, you need to trick to boost your Special bar and then a whole new world of crazy trickin' opens up. Our current fave new move is the moonwalk. Jacko himself would weep!

Set a goal in the editor and a dude shows up to challenge you when you play your park



Combo letters need to be close or you'll never get them all without breaking your line

computer and video games TEAM RECKONS

LEE

"This feels like classic Tony to play, despite the story additions. Instead the open structure and more mission-based approach add layers of depth to the gameplay to push the series in a welcome new direction. It's amazing how every TH game blows all other contenders out of the skatepark with grazes on their knees."

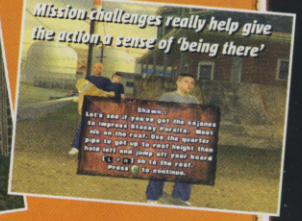
That could be you in the car if you impress the skating Pros

You'll develop a love-hate relationship with the clock as you try to chain your combos

GRAEME

"THUG feels real. It's grimy, it's dark, it's dirty, but most of all it's hotter than hell. The fantastic essence of the earlier Tony Hawk's games is still the foundation for this new approach, and the combination is superb. It puts you deeper into the experience than almost any game we've seen and lets you live out your pro skater dreams the hard way. You'll appreciate the rewards even more!"

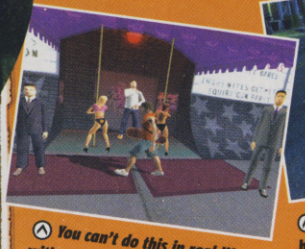
Grind the neighbours' prize-winning gardens



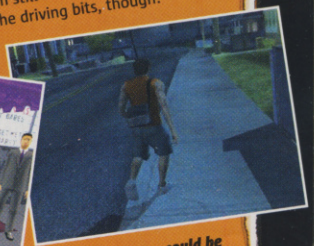
Mission challenges really help give the action a sense of 'being there'

MIKE

"Off-the-board action! My first instinct was to call up and scream at Neversoft for butchering its amazing skate engine. But when I got hands-on with THUG I was stunned at how perfectly the on-foot stuff fits in. It definitely brings a fresh flavour to linking tricks together, and accessing new areas. Plus the whole countdown clock thing adds even more tension to stringing together mammoth lines. I'm still not convinced about the driving bits, though."



You can't do this in real life without getting dissed by bouncers



So trendy you could be heading out for a night of power clubbing in town

INCOMING

ACCESS ALL AREAS TO THE HOTTEST FORTHCOMING GAMES!

HOW CVG'S PREVIEWS WORK

- PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
- DEVELOPER: ACTIVISION
- OUT: DECEMBER 25
- ONLINE GAMING
- x16

IN A NUTSHELL

Hotly anticipated, super-realistic, sneaky covert-ops sequel to last year's first-person shooter. The team-orientated multiplayer mode encompasses a wide variety of objective-based missions.

GAMECUBE
XBOX
GBA

WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

ONLINE GAMING
Can you play the game online, against other gamers around the globe? Find out here

PUBLISHER, DEVELOPER AND RELEASE DATE
Who makes the game and when it's due out, to the best of CVG's knowledge

PLAYERS
How many people can play. If it's anything from one to 32, we'll put 32!

IN A NUTSHELL
A brief summary of what the game is like. If it's an update and CVG has already previewed it we'll also sum up stuff we've said before

FORMAT
The console we played the game on is highlighted red, but other formats it's coming out on are listed too!

WEBSITE
Want more info, more screens and to see it in action? Visit this URL!

THE BEST PICS
See exactly how good (or bad!) the game looks with CVG's sweet-as screenshots

INFO OVERLOAD!
What it's like to play, how it compares to other games and whether it's any good

CVG OPINION
What we thought of the game, no matter what stage of development the game is at

WE LOVE
The good things we like about the game so far

WE HATE
The things we'd really like the developers to avoid including in the final game

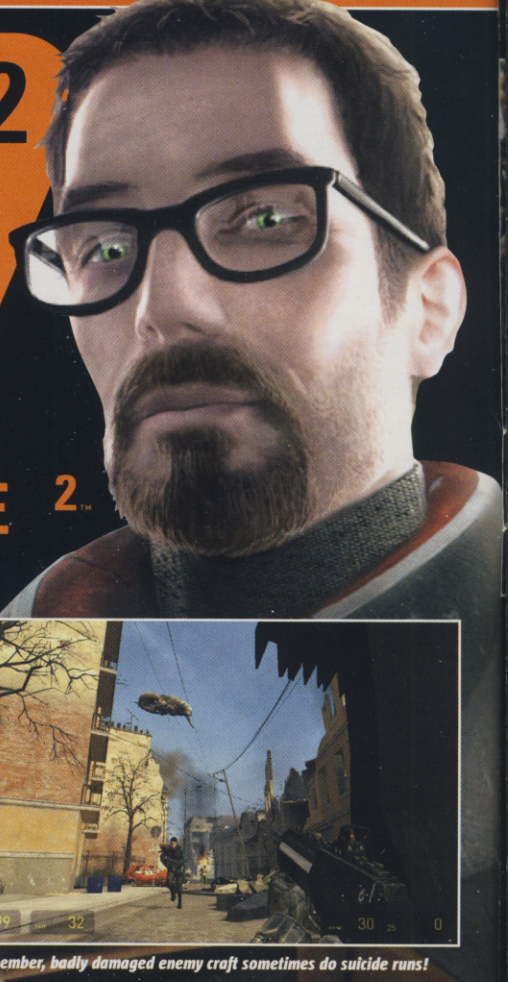
WHAT THE EXCITE METER™ MEANS

You can tell how excited CVG's experts are about the game being previewed simply by looking at the Excite Meter! Easy, huh?

NEW INFO AND PICS!

Missions aren't confined to City 17. This level is set on a burning cargo ship, crammed full of zombies

VALVE TALKS TO CVG!



HALF-LIFE 2™

- PUBLISHER: VU GAMES
- DEVELOPER: VALVE
- OUT: TBA
- ONLINE GAMING?
- TBC

IN A NUTSHELL

Sequel to one of the most influential shooters ever and some four years in the making, HL2 promises to rewrite the shooter rulebook – and that's based on what little has been shown so far.

PC CD ROM
XBOX

WWW.VALVESOFTWARE.COM

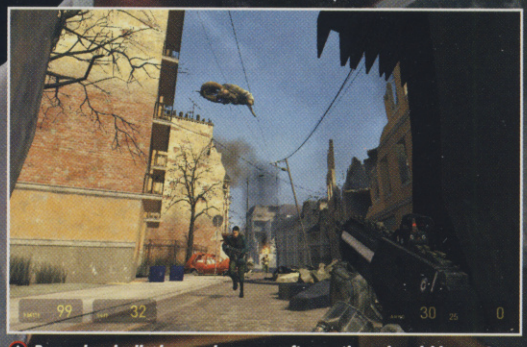
UPDATE!

Hold everything. Book yourself a holiday, plan yourself a sickie, sell your Gran to upgrade your PC. Time's almost up in the agonising wait for the über-shooter that promises to drag the gaming nation into one giant experiment in sleep deprivation, otherwise known as playing Half-Life 2.

With just a few weeks left on the countdown clock, CVG managed to catch up with developer Valve (not easy as their people are pretty nippy on their feet) to get the latest on how the game is coming together. During our conversation, some exciting new information cropped up, like the fact that you'll be able to drive an array of nifty vehicles. These range from machine gun-toting buggies to heavily armoured APCs – you'll need 'em to mince up the 50 types of alien invaders threatening the planet. Nice!

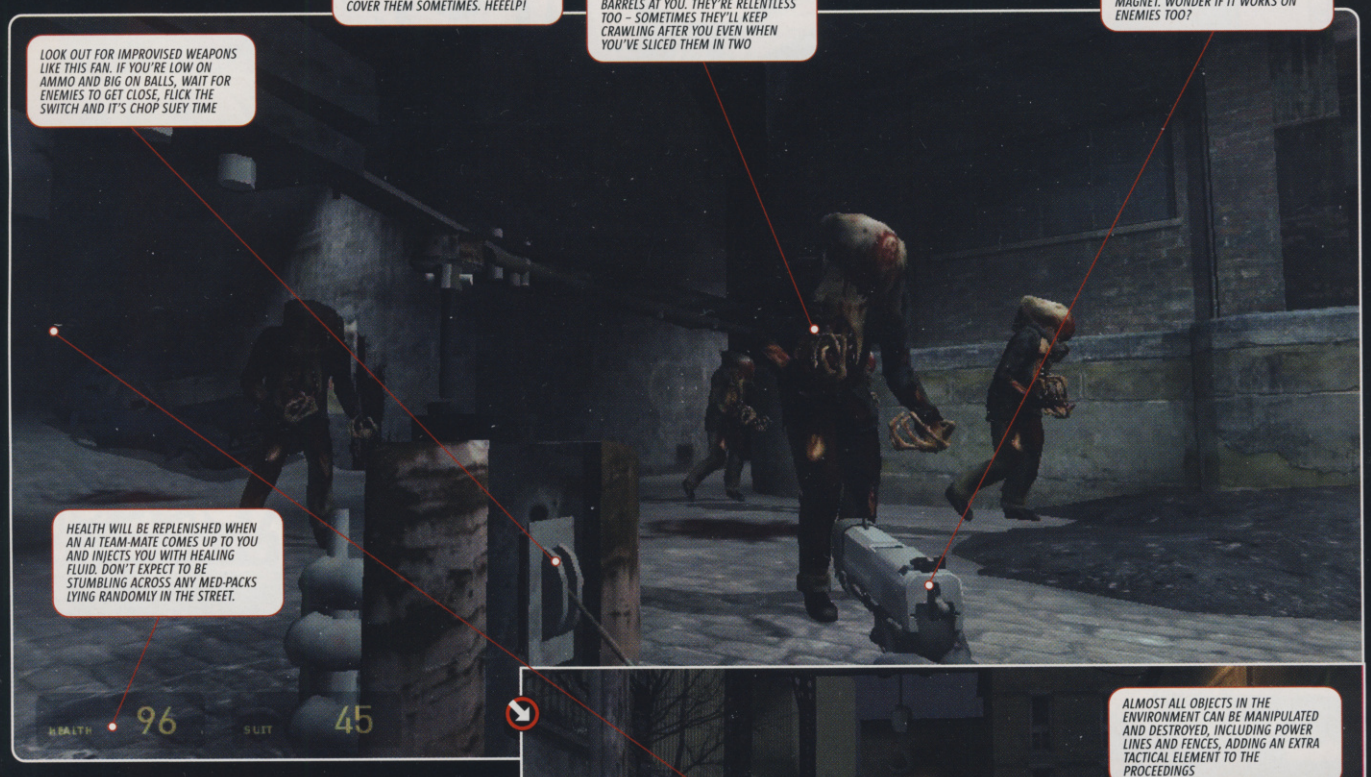
KEEPING THE STREETS TIDY

And in an attempt to make HL2 feel as realistic as possible (we already know about the breathtaking physics and AI which intelligently reacts to your actions rather than being scripted), you'll no longer stumble



Remember, badly damaged enemy craft sometimes do suicide runs!

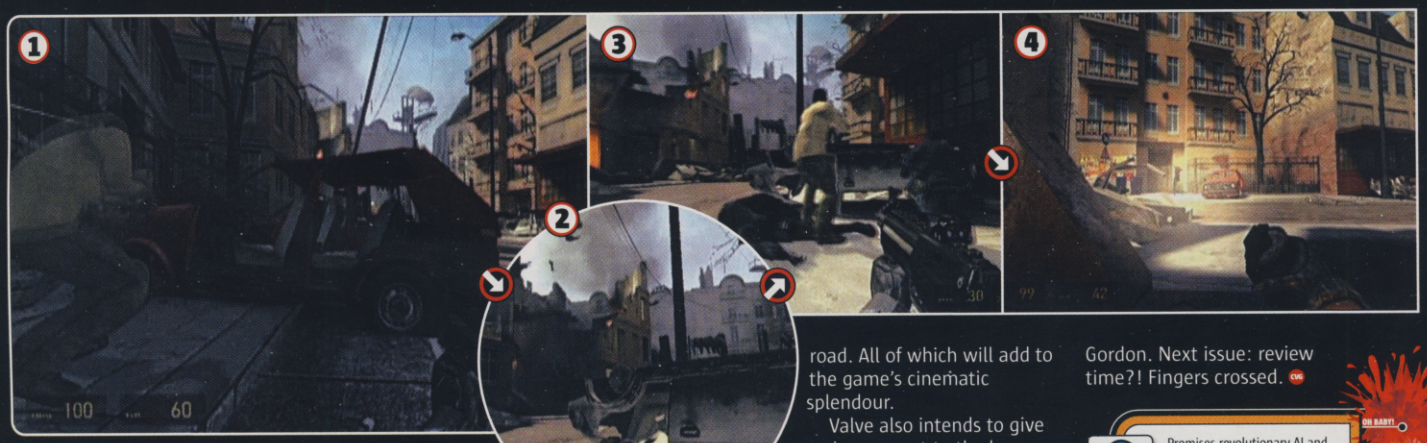
WELCOME TO THE ROTARY CLUB



WHAT A CONCEPT

Check out this new concept art! Reckon you're safe inside that tracked vehicle? We've seen a giant insectoid alien...

Looks like a sniper assassin to us



across med-packs in the middle of a street to replenish your health. Instead, you'll have to seek out medics to heal you in the midst of some of the massive team-based battles that you'll become embroiled in.

Of course there'll be a huge array of weaponry. Heat-seeking rockets, object manipulators, machine guns, shotguns and pheromone bombs that let you control certain enemies like the terrifying Starship Trooper-esque Antlions. Not forgetting the now legendary brain-busting crowbar, which you'll be handed by NPCs, rather than finding them lying about randomly in the road. All of which will add to the game's cinematic splendour.

Valve also intends to give massive support to the home-grown Mod spin-offs community, including a weekend-long course to would-be DIY designers. Valve still claimed that the game would ship on September 30, but our hunch is that it'll slip by at least a month. Just enough time to grow yourself a goatee, blag yourself a crowbar and change your name by deed poll to Gordon. Next issue: review time?! Fingers crossed. CVG

CVG OPINION

Promises revolutionary AI and physics, most immersive storyline and environments ever and best use of a goatee beard in a videogame. **Gordon**

WE LOVE

- *Freeform AI reacts intelligently*
- *Characters actually look real*
- *Huge array of enemies*

WE HATE

- *Not knowing if it's slipping*
- *What's happening to multiplay?*
- *When's the Xbox version out?*

POKÉMON™ CHANNEL & POKÉMON PINBALL

■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO
■ DEVELOPER NINTENDO
■ OUT: 2004

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Pokémania continues, with one new title apiece planned for the GameCube and GBA. There's also Pokémon Colosseum in the works for the first half of 2004. Will it never end?

POKÉMON CHANNEL | POKÉMON PINBALL

WWW.NINTENDO.COM

UPDATE!

With Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire being Nintendo's biggest titles since... well, since Pokémon Gold and Silver, there's no questioning the strength of Nintendo's most powerful brand.

The latest venue for the catchable critters are the GBA and Cube, with three more titles making the trip over from Japan shortly.

POKÉMON CHANNEL

When Pikachu doesn't want to go outside, he'll let you know

POKÉMON CHANNEL

Watch the Pokémon Nice News Network with Pikachu. It's nice news

I'M WITH PIKACHU

GameCube owners at last get their Pokéfix with Pokémon Channel. This sequel to N64's Hey You Pikachu does away with that game's microphone controller but keeps the same idea: make Pikachu the happiest Pokémon ever!

The game is centred on a television that's tuned into multiple channels of Pokémon programming. You and Pikachu can watch a Pokémon cartoon along with exercise programmes, quiz shows and other broadcasts featuring Pokémon in starring roles. Outside of television, you'll find items to collect around your house and outside. Your favourite Pokémon also make appearances as you and Pikachu answer their Pokétrivia.

POKÉMON CHANNEL

A bunch of Pokémon black and white mini games are included

POKÉMON CHANNEL

the Pokémon with your Pokéball in order to catch and evolve them to higher forms. Over 201 Pokémon are featured in the game, indexed in your Pokédex. Pikachu of course takes his usual central role, standing behind your flippers and occasionally launching an electric blast at a Pokéball that's gone astray.

POKÉMON CHANNEL

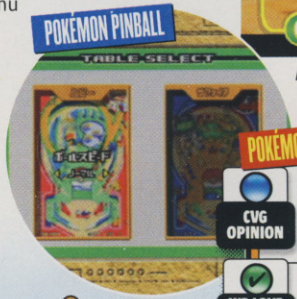
Live out your wildest dreams and order Pikachu around - you devil, you!

PORTABLE POKÉ-PINBALL

Portable gamers aren't being left out either. This latest GBA title takes the Pokémon friends to the pinball table. Two boards themed in Ruby and Sapphire are available, each with all the bumpers, passageways and sub-tables that you could want.

The catch is that you're shooting a Pokéball around the board, attempting to catch Pokémon. You must strike

POKÉMON PINBALL



The Ruby and Sapphire tables have different Pokémon

POKÉMON PINBALL

The Pokémon are scattered around the board

POKÉMON CHANNEL

CVG OPINION	Pikachu's charms never wear off, so if you love the yellow critter you'll have fun with Pokémon Channel. But only hardcore Pokéfreaks need apply. **Anoop**
WE LOVE	■ Yes we still love Pikachu ■ Watching Pikachu dance ■ Making Pikachu mad. It's sadistic
WE HATE	■ Why is the cool voice support replaced by a stupid pointer? ■ No game in there for non-Pokists

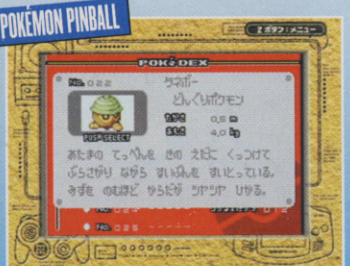
POKÉMON PINBALL

Rack up a huge score and slam the ball into the centre of the table to reveal a Pokémon

POKÉMON PINBALL

Once you move into Get Mode you have an opportunity to catch a brand new Poké-critter

POKÉMON PINBALL

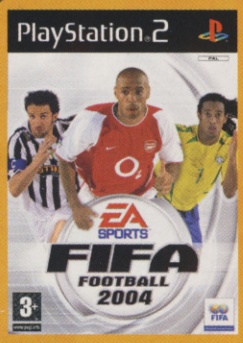


Information on all the Pokémon you've caught are stored in the Pokédex. D'oh!

POKÉMON PINBALL

CVG OPINION	Pokémon mixes well with pinball, and catching creatures on the table adds a whole new dimension to the gameplay. Very cool. **Anoop**
WE LOVE	■ Catching Pokémon is as thrilling as in the RPG games ■ It's a lot prettier than on GC
WE HATE	■ If you hate Pokémon then the pinball won't win you over ■ Catching 'em all over again

Improve your game at Comet.



FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

Release Date: 31 October 2003

FIFA Football 2004 returns as the true authority in football gaming. All new Off The Ball™ Control lets you control the man on the ball and the men off it. A new Career Mode gives you the chance to take a team from the lower divisions, battle through ranks, sign new players, and turn them into champions.

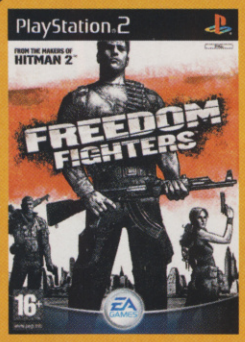
XBOX · GAMECUBE · PC · PS2 · GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

SSX3

Release Date: 24 October 2003

Discover the open mountain in the newest version of the smash-hit SSX snowboarding franchise. SSX 3 features all-new events and courses, awe-inspiring tricks, and a cast of cool, customizable characters. Discover the open terrain, explore its hidden crevices, and conquer its peaks.

XBOX · GAMECUBE · PC · PS2 · GAME BOY ADVANCE SP



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Release Date: 26 September 2003

In a world where the Soviet Union won the Cold War, a fierce conflict is unfolding in the streets of America. Taking on the role of Christopher Stone, players evolve from an average New Yorker into a fearless patriot who recruits and leads an army of freedom fighters in the streets of New York City.

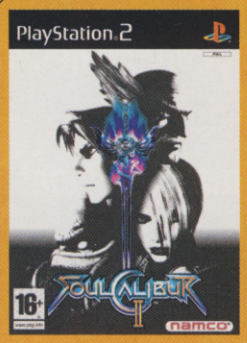
XBOX · GAMECUBE · PC · PS2

TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2004

Release Date: 21 November 2003

Specifically designed for the console, Total Club Manager 2004 offers total management control through an intuitive navigation system and dynamic user interface, while integrating the most comprehensive player and team database on the PS2.

XBOX · PC · PS2



SOULCALIBUR™ II

Release Date: 26 September 2003

SoulCalibur™ II is the third installment in the hugely successful "Soul" franchise. The game offers massive refinements in its arena design, offensive and defensive combat and battle tactics, alongside improved character graphics and intuitive controls.

XBOX · PS2

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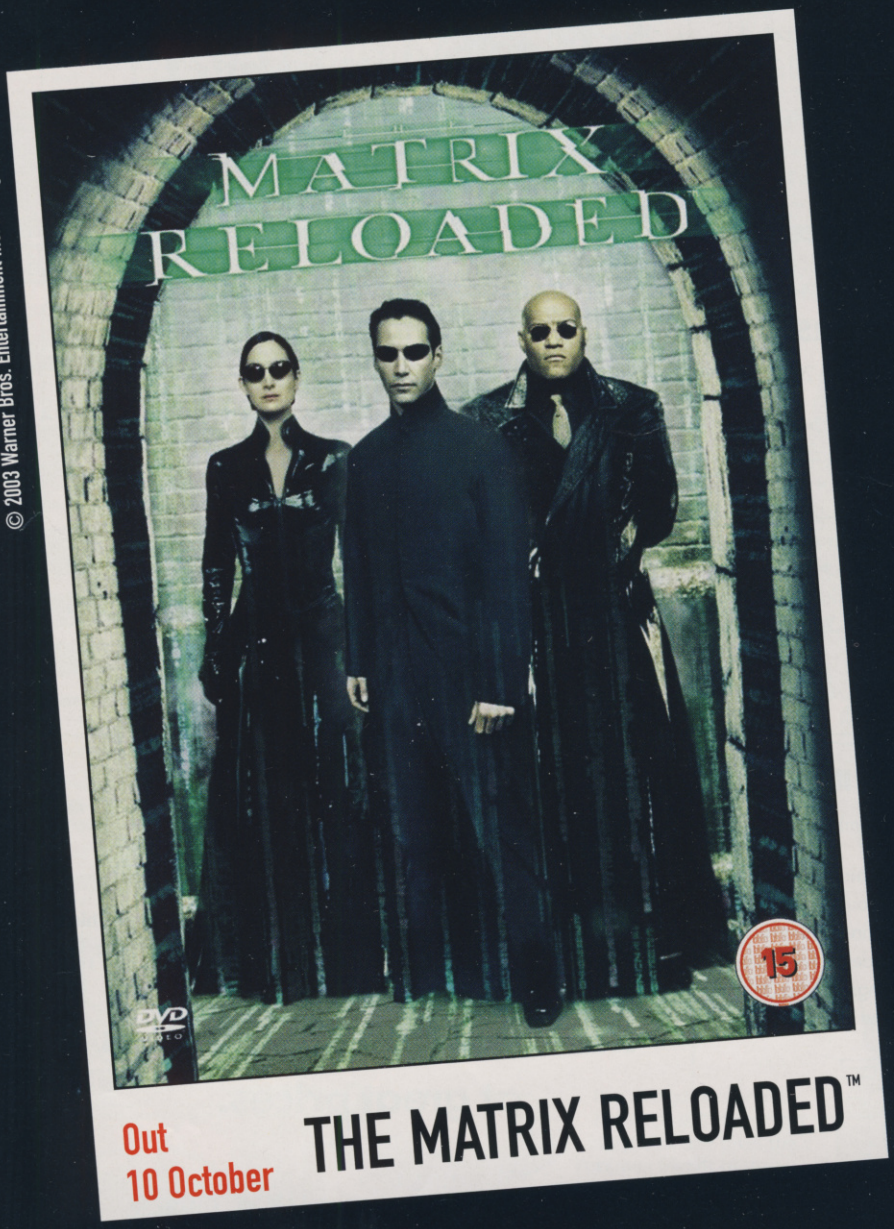

Out
10 October

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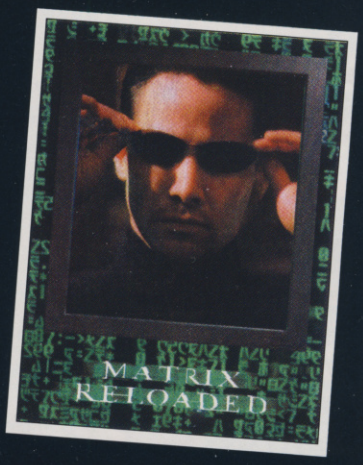

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- PUBLISHER KONAMI
- DEVELOPER KCET
- OUT: OCTOBER 31
- ONLINE GAMING x8

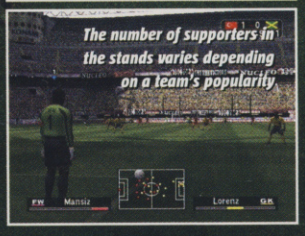
IN A NUTSHELL

Winning Eleven's European brother is gearing up to knock FIFA 2004 out of the title race this Christmas. It's got all the skills and thrills to keep you hooked for months. Scratch that, years!

WWW.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM

UPDATE!

After an R2 sidestep, pull back and hold R2 to cheekily roll the ball under your foot

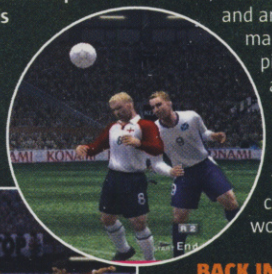


PES3 TM

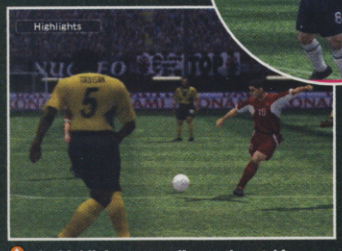
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Last month we gushed like loonies about how wicked Winning Eleven 7 is. This month we've been caning the English version, Pro Evolution Soccer 3, and we're not going to shut up about how brilliant it is either. So there!

It plays just as amazingly as its Japanese counterpart. As you'd expect, all the new feints and tricks are in here, like the Zidane-style 360° pirouette. However, although the dribbling and close control is much improved, it's much more of a passing game.



Defenders close down space faster and are far harder to out-manoeuvre, forcing you to ping the ball around rapidly and more accurately than before. This makes for much more realistic matches, and urges you to call upon all your creativity to piece together world-class plays.



The highlights are really worth watching now

BACK IN THE DRESSING ROOM

It's not just the on-pitch action that shines. All PES3's new features are guaranteed to make it a sure-fire success with fans of the celebrated series. An extra 24 club teams bring the grand total to 64, and it's awesome that this time you can play club versus national. Take Brazil on with West Ham, or go up against Argentina as the Gooners! You've got the freedom to mix it up as much as you want.

Plus there's stacks more silverware to chase. New cups and leagues such as the WEFA Championships (essentially the Champions League) present you with loads of extra hours of intensely competitive action to enjoy. Also this time you can set it so that you're penalised for resetting the PS2 mid-match if you're losing in a tournament or league game.

This same penalty rule can be applied in the expanded Master League mode, which now sees you battling for special PES points as well as regular points as you attempt to climb through divisions. These PES points are earned when you win certain fixtures, and can be spent in the new shop where you can buy all sorts of extra unlockable treasures. New balls, different match speeds, extra stadiums, teams, players, and funky hairdos! There's a mountain of stuff to collect, and you'll want it all.

Other than having to hit the ball a smidge harder, the free kick system remains exactly the same

WE RESPECT YOUR COMMENTS

You'll no longer feel the need to switch the language settings to Spanish, because the English commentary is miles better than before. Gone are the repetitive and lifeless comments that we had to endure last time round.

But, as with WE7, the alarming lack of official team names and incorrect player spellings in PES3 will bug the hell out of hardcore footie followers. This is where FIFA 2004 really outclasses PES3. But if you're willing and patient enough to wade through all the amazing customisation menus, you can make it as official as you want – except for creating sponsorship logos. It is a downer, but it's tough to bear too much of a grudge considering that the actual gameplay is streets ahead of any other footie title to date.

MR POTATO HEAD

You can't download your face into the game like you can in Tony Hawk's Underground, but in PES3 you've got all the tools to create a face manually.

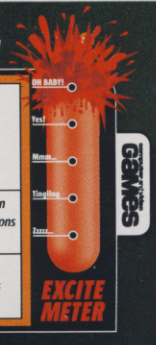
Once you've got all the basics in place, like haircut and skin tone, select the 'build a face' option. Now tinker around with the positioning and style of each individual facial feature

Keep the ball moving or you'll lose possession in a flash

CVG OPINION This is the pro's choice. No other footie game gives you this much freedom to express yourself on the pitch. Accept no substitutes! **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Instinctively super-sharp action
- Player likenesses and animations
- Replays at any time

WE HATE
- You can't play online
- The shortage of official teams and kits



RATCHET & CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED

Ratchet isn't such a cuddly character this time around – he's ready for a scrap!

PUBLISHER: SONY
DEVELOPER: INSOMNIAC GAMES
OUT: DECEMBER 11

IN A NUTSHELL

Following the global success of Ratchet & Clank, the PS2's oddest couple return. This action-packed adventure takes them to the farthest corners of the universe in search of an experimental Proto Pet.

WWW.INSOMNIACGAMES.COM

UPDATE!

Seems Ratchet and Clank aren't Going Commando after all. But the name change doesn't fool us. Sony may not want us to think of the rascally robot and his furry friend as going pantless, but that's how we'll always think of them.

Our heroes are becoming edgier and more violent for this eagerly awaited sequel, promising players a deeper and more rewarding experience that will test their combat skills to the max.

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

Since their exploits in the original, Ratchet and Clank have fallen on hard times. With the universe at peace, no one needs heroes anymore and they've been reduced to appearing on cheesy talk shows earn a buck.

However, their world is turned upside down when the pair come face to face with Abercombie Fitzwidget, CEO of Mega Corp in the nearby Bogon galaxy. One of the corp's most vital experiments, the cute Proto Pet, has been stolen by a mysterious saboteur and Fitzwidget hires Ratchet to jump into his spaceship and chase the light-fingered rogue.

The game features 20 sprawling worlds, each one brought to life by oddball enemies and indigenous wildlife that make the original's locations look empty by comparison. There's also more variety in the missions and challenges on offer, with space battles, gladiator-style brawls, racing sequences and improved character interaction. The result is that Locked And Loaded feels a lot slicker and more accomplished than its classic predecessor.

Aside from the new RPG elements (check out the box on the right), this sequel will also delight fans of the original game with bigger worlds to explore, brand new characters to meet and the same twisted sense of humour that made the first game stand out from the crowd.

Yup, you've guessed it – we're pretty excited about this one. If the developers at Insomniac keep their heads down and continue polishing the gameplay, this could be one of the biggest PS2 Christmas releases. CVG

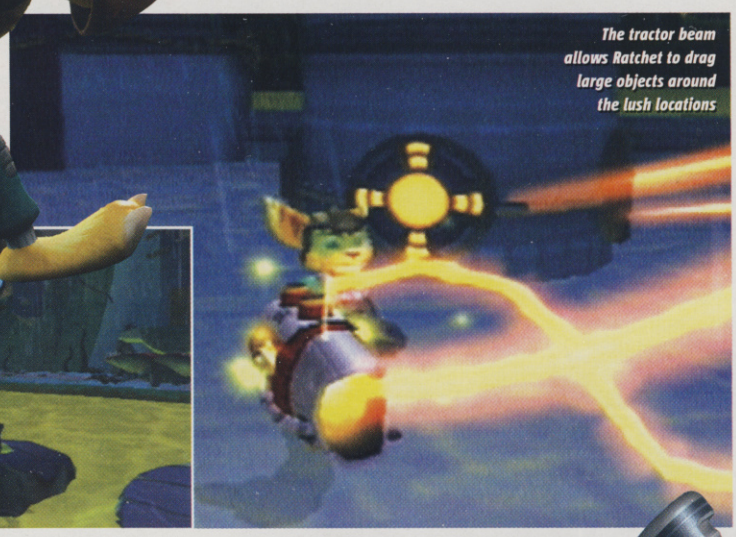
CHARACTER BUILDING

The blasting and platforming action has an RPG edge, with players being able to develop Ratchet's strength and abilities over time by defeating enemies and collecting Nanotech points.

As Ratchet kills enemies he accumulates Nanotech points

Before long, he reaches his Nanotech target...

...making him stronger and better equipped to tackle the game's bosses



The tractor beam allows Ratchet to drag large objects around the lush locations

In the swamp, jump on the back of monsters to get a lift across the deadly green goo

Once again, the characters you meet are great

The Lylat Wars-style flights between planets are fun and exciting

This gadget allows Ratchet to turn switches and activate machines

NO BATTERIES REQUIRED

SMASH CARS

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PlayStation.2

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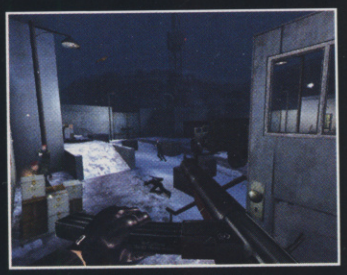


As a prequel to NOLF 2, the story fits in snugly with the exploits of Cate Archer

- PUBLISHER VU GAMES
- DEVELOPER MONOLITH
- OUT: NOVEMBER 2003

PC CD ROM

ONLINE GAMING x16

WWW.VUGAMES.COM

CONTRACT JACK

Videogame transvestism – we love it. And playing as a woman has never been more fun than when stepping into the panties of Sixties swinger Cate Archer for class PC shooter No One Lives Forever 2. But now Monolith's new standalone expansion pack has gone all manly on us, dropping you into the crusty Y-fronts of a gruff hitman.

Normally NOLF games have you sneaking around, but Contract J.A.C.K (Just Another Contract Killer) is a man whose specialities are carnage, gunfire and things that explode. To help him in his fight against rival criminal organisation Danger Danger he's got gadgets to die for – a Vespa scooter with a mounted machine gun, a skidoo with a rocket launcher and enough C4 to blow up a small island nation. Seems the Swinging Sixties weren't about peace and love after all.

One of the game's highlights is a frenetic laser battle in a lunar space station

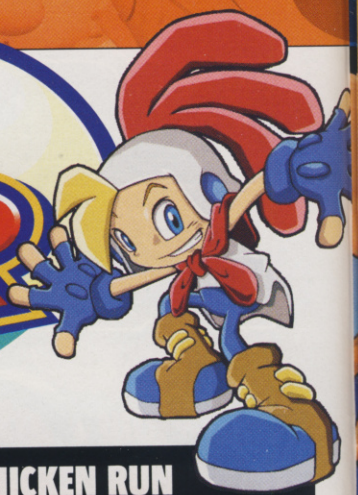
Jack will be killing people in locations as exotic as Italy and the Czech Republic

WE LOVE
- Sexy Sixties setting
- Imaginative weapons
- High quota of violence

WE HATE
- Fairly short
- Sometimes a bit too silly

EXCITE METER

BILLY HATCHER and the Giant Egg



- PUBLISHER SEGA
- DEVELOPER SONIC TEAM
- OUT: NOVEMBER

ONLINE GAMING x4

IN A NUTSHELL

It's the latest bonkers brainchild from the creators of Sonic The Hedgehog. Developers rarely have the balls (or indeed the eggs) to cook up platform adventures as out there or original as this.

WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM

Spider-Man's gimpish red romper suit. Superman's pants-on-the-outside get-up. It's fair to say that superheroes aren't renowned for their fashion sense. But Billy Hatcher's chicken suit takes the biscuit. It's got to be one of the daftest looks in history.

But Billy boy's got an excuse for dressing up like an idiot. Unlike Spidey or Clark Kent he gets his special powers from his stupid costume. So what amazing special ability does his clobber give him that's worth such physical humiliation? Duh, power over all eggs of course. How mad is that?

GOTTA HATCH 'EM ALL

The egg is Billy's greatest weapon. There are loads of different sorts dotted around every level. Encased within each ovum is a Pokémon-like creature that Billy can use to attack enemies or to help him solve puzzles.

However, in order to coax these handy helpers out of their shells you've got to roll your chosen egg around the level and feed it so that it grows. Once it grows to full size hit the right shoulder button and Billy cock-a-doodle-doos, triggering the hatching process. Then bingo! You're the proud owner of a unique new buddy with special powers.

You'll team up with crazy flying monkeys with the ability to shower foes with lightning, fire-spitting kangaroo-type creatures, and bags of other bizarre beasts. But unlike Pokémon you can't collect the animals. Instead you team up with them for a short time until their powers run out.

Sonic Team's barmy new platformer is anything but ordinary, but that's where its charm lies. The combat and precision jumping elements are dead easy to master, but it's all the insane characters and egg-rolling antics that make it a truly unique experience. Sure it's weird, but you can't fault Sonic Team's ambition to bring us something fresh and wildly different. Cracking stuff... sorry.

You get to ride some of the creatures that hatch from your eggs

This little fella is Richie the seal. His powers are ice and illusions. Clever pup

Protecting your egg is essential. Otherwise it will develop cracks and eventually end up scrambled

CHICKEN RUN

It's not all single-player egg-based madness. You can invite up to three equally mental mates into a range of different arenas for multiplayer showdowns.

Nothing says I hate you like a wild electric monkey. You agree?

It's a race to hatch your egg first. Then you can kill enemies!

Roll your egg over pieces of fruit to feed it. Don't you know that's how baby birds are born?

Be careful or you'll find yourself on the receiving end of a severe tongue lashing

CVG OPINION

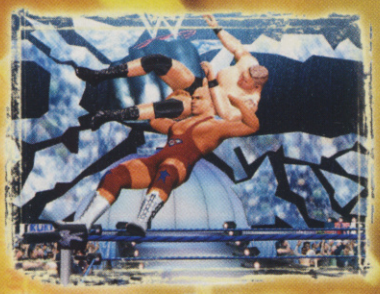
Unconventional and mad as a bag of hedgehogs. Too strange to be a huge hit, but hardcore platform game fans will love its entertaining eccentricity. **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Barmy hatchling allies with super-attacks
- It's totally insane
- Simple to pick up and play

WE HATE
- Unoriginal look
- It feels very kiddie

EXCITE METER

BECOME A LEGEND



"...the wrestling game to die for..."
Nintendo Official Magazine
May 2003

"...yet another smash-hit WWE title..."
C&VG – June 2003

WRESTLEMANIA XIX

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FINAL FANTASY®

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■ PUBLISHER
SQUARE/ENIX
■ DEVELOPER
SQUARE/ENIX
■ OUT: NOVEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

In this lighter, faster companion to FFX, two years have passed since the defeat of Sin. Yuna has joined the Gullwings, a high-flying group of sphere hunters, jetting through old and new areas of Spira alike.

WWW.FFX2.COM

UPDATE!

A battle view at the high point of an Active Link mission

Haute couture is apparently one of the Dress Spheres

A Calypso retreat characterises the newer softer side of FF: X-2's environments

FINAL FANTASY X-2

Every couple of years, the most venerable RPG resolutely fails to live up to its name, trotting out an eagerly awaited sequel. But this time it's more like something old, something new, as FFX-2 brings back old systems with a new spin.

To the surprise of many, the fully turn-based battles and sphere grid of FFX are history. In their place, welcome back, well, history. The now classic active system is in effect, and running at such a speed that battles are brief affairs, often with little time for conscious thought. But spicing up the mix is a dynamic job system involving Dress Spheres, which allow for mid-battle job changes. Better yet, change your suit and attributes, and skills and abilities also make the switch. That makes for frantic, but entertaining conflict. How good does that sound?

The first of a handful of stunning new Spira locales

Yuna learns how the audience felt about her singing

MISSION POSSIBLE

As Yuna roams with the sphere-hunting Gullwings, the choice of engagement is completely your own. Certain missions qualify as Active Links, or tasks which propel the story forward. Complete enough of those and your Story Level goes up a notch, taking the plot with it. But there is a host of other activities to dally with, some of which involve Event Spheres, while others simply show off the changed world of Spira.

You'll find quite a few new sights, but there's old ground to re-explore, as well. Some of the areas feature too many recycled vistas, but that's to be expected with such short development turnaround. Still, a cheeky approach to the RPG makes this not-sequel a must. CVG

Yes, Yuna can jump, but it's really just window dressing. Hey, dig the boots!

Each Dress Sphere change causes a costume switch as well

The heroic trio cops a popstar pose. Can I have an autograph?

A lovely, softer look for the terminally gothic Paine

FINAL FANTASY XI

PC CD ROM

UPDATE!

FFX-2's changeable job classes, active battles and open narrative also show up online in FFXI on PS2 and PC.

The online adventure displays the hallmark colourful spells and battles, bolstered by simple party-building mechanics and trade systems. Teamwork is essential, leading to rampant player cooperation. Random adventuring generates experience and power for your country, while primary missions create the most sprawling Fantasy yet. CVG

Who wants to fight all the time? Anyone fancy a quick game of DOAX?

Battles are active and very graphics-heavy. Try this in EverQuest!

CVG OPINION

The change of pace is a gamble, but the job system is great. It's a shame this isn't a new game in its own right, but this could still be a fun diversion. **Alex P**

WE LOVE

- Lighthearted change of pace from FFX's super-seriousness
- Selecting missions at random

WE HATE

- Recycled elements from FFX
- Battle scenes could be over too quickly for strategy fans

PUBLISHER
NINTENDO
DEVELOPER
SQUARE ENIX
OUT: **OCTOBER 31**

ONLINE GAMING | x4

IN A NUTSHELL

Final Fantasy returns to Nintendo as a multiplayer action game. Cooperative play saves the day in an epic battle as up to four players travel the world in a caravan to save mankind from a poisonous mist.

WWW.NINTENDO.COM

UPDATE!

Amazing water effects help make it one of the best-looking FFs

Two players are better than one. Four players are better than two

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

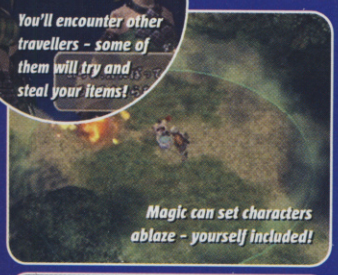
Crystal Chronicles follows in the footsteps of FFXI, in that it takes Final Fantasy to new territory.

CVG's recent playtest of the Japanese version reveals a dungeon crawler in which four players battle beasts in real time, collecting keys to unlock doors and advance through the stage. Defeat the dungeon boss and you gain access to new areas of the world.

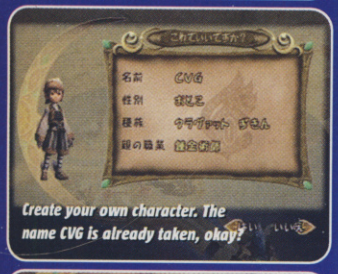
Controls and gameplay have been kept simple. A single button is used for all actions, with the L and R triggers are used to cycle between available attacks, items and spells. Magic requires that you merely collect elemental orbs that are dropped by enemies. When tossed, an orb releases its characteristic spell that can be combined with spells from other players for big effects.

For multiplayer mode, each player is required to have a Game Boy Advance. The GBA is used in place of the regular controller with the mini-screen used to display menus, radar and statistics. You'll be looking between the television and GBA as you play.

You'll encounter other travellers - some of them will try and steal your items!



Magic can set characters ablaze - yourself included!



Create your own character. The name CVG is already taken, okay?

This overhead map connects various areas of the world

FINAL FANTASY GAIDEN

Those expecting a dramatic single-player experience will be disappointed. Even in single-player mode, the story is limited to background information on the world and an occasional encounter with another caravan while moving about the world map. Characters you encounter on the road and in town are there mainly to exchange items.

The Square Enix artistic touch isn't missing, though. Memorable character designs and fantastic artwork for the world combine with screen-filling lighting and transparency effects to make this among the best-looking FF games ever. The soundtrack also lives up to the legacy, with peaceful music for the dungeon sections and a really catchy opening theme.

Townsfolk offer a bit of dialogue, but there isn't a lot of story going down

Trekking through the lands. Cutscenes are mainly used in the introduction

Male, female and other — the choice is yours. Hey, we're not hung up on gender

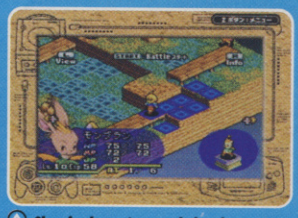
FF TACTICS

UPDATE!

With FFCC not due out until next year, Nintendo fans will have to use Tactics on GBA to hold them off.

Thankfully, Square Enix cut no corners in its GBA debut. This title offers hours and hours of the same complex strategy that we fell in love with in the original, along with an imaginative storyline that truly puts you into the game. Look forward to a review shortly.

Any game that begins with a snowball fight is okay with us!



Classic characters and classic strategy on the go. Looking good!

Your caravan departs to take on the dreaded death mist. Don't forget to hold your breath!

CVG OPINION

We're loving it so far. Single-player offers up a unique gaming experience, but get past the hurdles and multiplayer is where it's at. **Anoop**

WE LOVE

- Unique gameplay system
- Classy looking, even for FF
- Awesome art and music

WE HATE

- Looking down at the GBA
- Perhaps a little too simple

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■ PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
■ DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS
■ OUT: OCTOBER 31
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WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/CLUBFOOTBALL

CLUB FOOTBALL

How's this for trying to topple FIFA and Pro Evo's crown? Instead of releasing a spanking new footie game, Codemasters is releasing 17 new footie games!

Come October store shelves will be swamped with Club Football, a brand of football titles tailored to individual clubs. Seventeen elite European clubs have been picked to have their own Club Football game, including Man Utd, Arsenal, Chelsea, Aston Villa, Leeds, Liverpool, Celtic, Rangers and Real Madrid.

So why have a football game tailored to one club? The idea is that each title will reward fans with extra information on their favourite team. Winning competitions gets you video clips of historic moments from the club's past, plus a heap of other rewards. And if you're a real fan, you can even create yourself as a player and join the squad.

Ultimately, how the game plays should be the deciding factor on whether you buy it or not. From what we've seen so far there are some nice touches – like the managers leaping off the benches when the team scores and Barry Davies on commentary – but on the field, all we can say at this stage is must try harder.

Admire your trophies in all their jagged glory

Oliver Kahn't quite reach that one!

WE LOVE
- Gary Lineker and Barry Davies on the mic
- Real kits, names, stadiums

WE HATE
- Seeing Alex Ferguson celebrating goals
- Not as slick as Pro Evo

EXCITE METER

■ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
■ DEVELOPER BEEP INDUSTRIES
■ OUT: OCTOBER 31
ONLINE GAMING
WWW.MICROSOFT.COM

IN A NUTSHELL

Xbox exclusive that turns platform game conventions on their head – Voodoo Vince must mutilate himself to defeat enemies. Instead of avoiding perils, you have to make use of them. Go play with a chainsaw...

Shocking! Vince gets struck by lightning

Voodoo Vince

Voodoo Vince has got a host of abilities that most platform stars can only dream of. Want an example? When was the last time you saw Mario cutting himself in half with a chainsaw to defeat a Goomba? See, Vince is tougher than most, and he has a party bag of other crazy stuff to prove it. Your eyes are never gonna believe this...

CALL SOCIAL SERVICES!

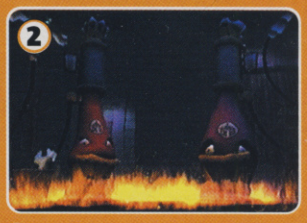
So why is Vince so keen to hack off his limbs? Answer: because he's a Voodoo doll that's used to having pins stuck in him to inflict pain on enemies. In true voodoo style Vince uses this trick to defeat enemies and bosses, but first he must inflict the damage upon himself.

Simple pitfalls that other platform heroes would run away from, Vince just laps up. Instead of avoiding things like fire or a heavy weight that might drop from above, Vince must seek out such pain-causing perils. It's not always easy though, there are also plenty of platforming puzzles to solve before you're allowed to progress.

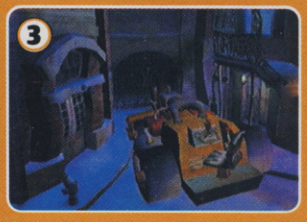
GETTING AROUND

Before you get to dismember limbs, you'll need to prove your platforming prowess to reach new areas and solve some tricky puzzles. Check these out.

Vince sets himself on fire and runs through the streets. But why?



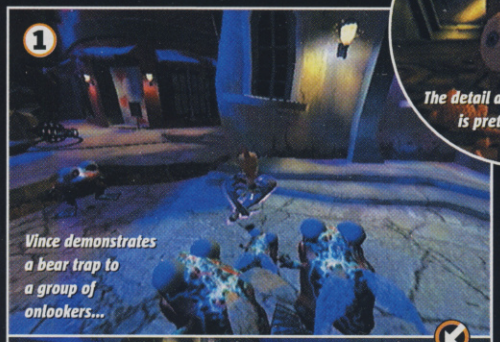
Petrol pumps on fire? A burning Vince to the rescue, Backdraft-style!



With the pumps removed, Vince powers up the steamroller. Ooh, could be nasty...

What's he studying that statue for? Ah, must be to give it an apple...

One apple later, and the hind legs lift Vince up



Vince demonstrates a bear trap to a group of onlookers...

Under his voodoo curse the enemies instantly feel the effects of the trap

The detail and design of Vince is pretty impressive

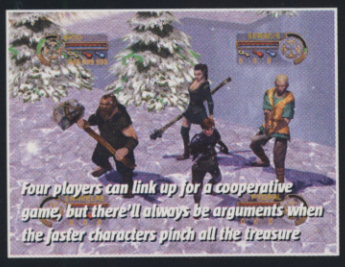
A huge dino-skeleton boss. Nasty

A great mix of platforms, intelligent puzzles and humour that is actually funny. Looks like Microsoft may finally have found their mascot. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Unique gameplay twist
- Offbeat humour
- Vince – a memorable character

WE HATE
- Drab levels
- Vince dies falling down holes

EXCITE METER



Four players can link up for a cooperative game, but there'll always be arguments when the faster characters pinch all the treasure

■ PUBLISHER ATARI
■ DEVELOPER ATARI
■ OUT: NOV 2003

GAMECUBE PS2

ONLINE GAMING x4

WWW.ATARI.COM

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS HEROES

What is it with evil sorcerers? No sooner has some brave soul banished them to inter-dimensional exile than a dumbass cleric pops up and sets them free.

Honestly, sometimes you wonder why heroes bother getting out of bed in the morning...

Dungeons & Dragons Heroes sees you hacking and slashing your way across a dark fantasy land, killing all manner of spiders, skeletons and hobgoblins in your quest to return badass conjuror Kaedin to his magical prison.

With the option to choose between a human fighter, a rogue halfling, a wizard elf and a dwarf cleric, up to four players can tackle the adventure in a Gauntlet stylee, using the heroes' unique abilities and devastating spells to dispatch the undead and collect treasure.

Like the Dungeons & Dragons role-playing games of old, you can develop your characters' stats and abilities by earning experience points during battle, in turn giving you access to magical attacks and fearsome finishing moves that are essential for defeating the hulking bosses.

With intuitive controls that allow you to battle multiple enemies and an endless stream of monsters to mash, Dungeon & Dragons Heroes promises to be a fun, no-brainer death fest that will appeal to fans of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance and other beefed-up fantasy romps.

The action can get quite bloody, with the heroes hacking the monsters into little gory bits

Some characters are more adept at unleashing mystical powers than others...

WE LOVE
- Addictive gameplay
- Intuitive controls
- Monsters everywhere!

WE HATE
- Repetitive action
- Predictable plot
- Finding bloody skeleton keys

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / Yes! / Mmm... / Tingling / Zzzzz...

Games

GREGORY HORROR SHOW: SOUL COLLECTOR

■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM
■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM
■ OUT: NOVEMBER 21

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Mixing up the stylish looks of PaRappa The Rapper and the creepy action of Resident Evil, Gregory Horror Show is what would happen if Tim Burton tried his hand at survival horror games.

WWW.CAPCOM.COM

UPDATE!

The Patchwork Cat, aka Neko Zombie, will gladly hand over her soul

Gregory the hotel owner and his naughty nephew James will pester you at every turn

A depressed cat with its eyes and lips stitched together, a sleazy pink lizard that fantasises about drawing blood and a two-faced, boss-eyed mouse intent on human sacrifice... Don't be fooled by its cutesy looks, Gregory Horror Show ain't for kids.

HOTEL HORROR

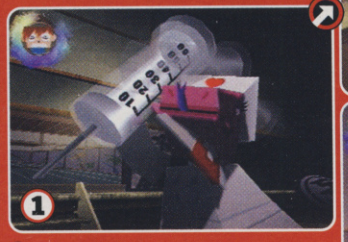
The game begins with the square-headed hero arriving at a mysterious hotel after becoming lost in the woods. On going to sleep, the reluctant guest comes face to face with the Grim Reaper who informs him that he must collect lost souls from the weirdos living in the hotel if he hopes to find his way home.

The game itself plays much like Resident Evil, with the hero collecting items, solving puzzles and munching on green herbs to boost his energy. Peering through keyholes is essential for spying on other guests and discovering their weaknesses, and stealth also plays an important part as you creep up on other characters to spring your nasty traps.

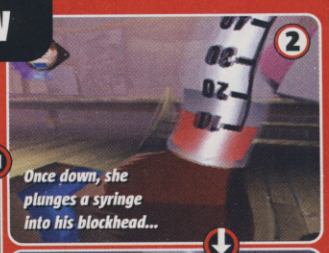
With an eerie soundtrack, disturbing set pieces and some satisfying puzzles to solve, Gregory's Horror Show demonstrates that you don't need blood, guns and gore to make players feel as if they've stepped into a living nightmare. CVG

REAL HORROR SHOW

If you steal a soul and meet its owner again on your travels, they'll try to drain your energy by unleashing a scary horror show that messes with your mind. Let the show begin...



Catherine the lizard corners our chunky hero and knocks him to the ground



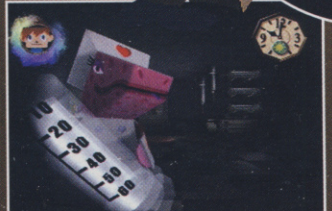
Once down, she plunges a syringe into his blockhead...

...and sucks out a gallon of blood. Her nurse's uniform is pretty kinky for a reptile

To improve his fragile mental state, our hero can take a nap in his bedroom or read a good book to stimulate his mind

The graphics are beautifully stylish. Check out the hero's 'flat top.' Groan!

When you've collected a soul, visit Death in your dreams to hand over the merchandise



Peep through keyholes to spy on other characters and discover their weaknesses

CVG OPINION

Fans of quirky games, stylish graphics and puzzling gameplay won't be disappointed by this strange little adventure. **David**

WE LOVE
- Stylish graphics
- Rewarding puzzles
- Innovative gameplay

WE HATE
- Cheesy music
- Some dodgy voices

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / Yes! / Mmm... / Tingling / Zzzzz...

Games

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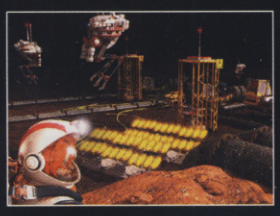
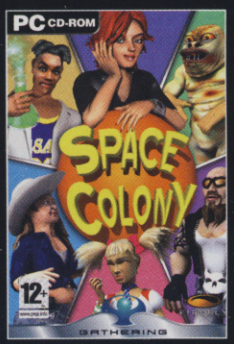
WELCOME TO LIFE BEYOND THE STARS!





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■ PUBLISHER
EIDOS
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■ OUT NOVEMBER 14

ONLINE GAMING

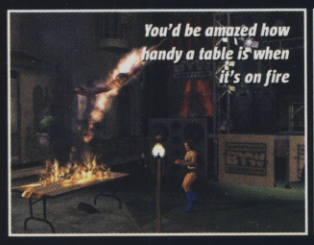
IN A NUTSHELL

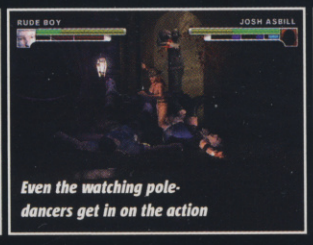
Hands-on test with Eidos's demented wrestling outing. Use insane moves, weapons and destructible scenery to batter your foes into unconsciousness and become the 'King of Hardcore'. It's not mild.

PS2 XBOX

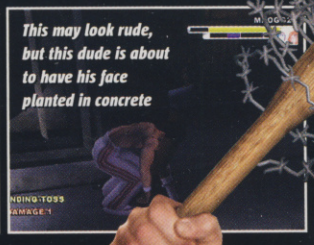
WWW.BYWGAME.COM

UPDATE!

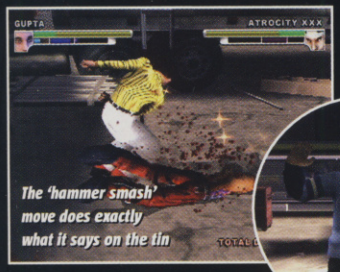

You'd be amazed how handy a table is when it's on fire



Even the watching pole-dancers get in on the action


This may look rude, but this dude is about to have his face planted in concrete

BACKYARD WRESTLING
DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

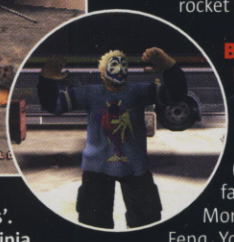


The 'hammer smash' move does exactly what it says on the tin

America likes its 'crazes'. Pogs, Pokémon and Ninja Turtle skateboards have all stolen attention time from generations of impressionable youths.

Backyard Wrestling, best described as Jackass meets WWE, is the latest brand to sweep the western world.

Except this time, it grabs the meaning of 'craze' by the jugular – it's crazier than playing Russian roulette with a rocket launcher...



BLOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR

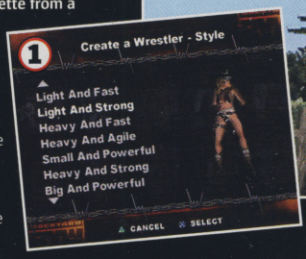
Developer Paradox has attempted to meld the 'realism' of WWE (pardon?) with the fantastical lunacy of Mortal Kombat and Tao Feng. You play as a real-life wrestler (or a created one, if you want) and compete for the accolade of hardcore champ through the backyards, stripclubs and slaughterhouses of small town Yanksville. The moves on offer are technically feasible – eye gouges, pile-drivers and spinning bulldogs can all be achieved by the pros, no matter how insane – but it's the amount of blood being spattered about gratuitously that drags this kicking and screaming into the grounds of video game sensationalism.

Backyard offers a more technical and harder-to-master experience than the WWE games, with timing the key to success. It's also considerably faster and less sluggish than the Legends Of Wrestling series. Despite a suspect lack of depth (unlockable bonus modes might redeem this however), basic multiplayer and a few niggling flaws, we can see this one banging a sizeable dent in WWE's hold on the wrestling gaming crown. Great metal soundtrack too. Bring it on, dudes... CVG

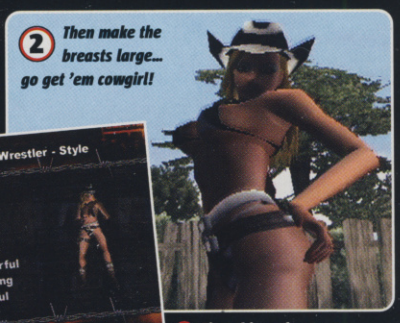
DIXIE CHICKS

As with all good wrestling games, Backyard lets you create your very own dude or dudette from a range of body shapes and fighting styles.

However, the library of moves seemed to pale in comparison to the ones featured in the WWE titles. Still, at least its ladies' breasts are bigger. Ho hum.



First thing, choose your preferred style of fighting...



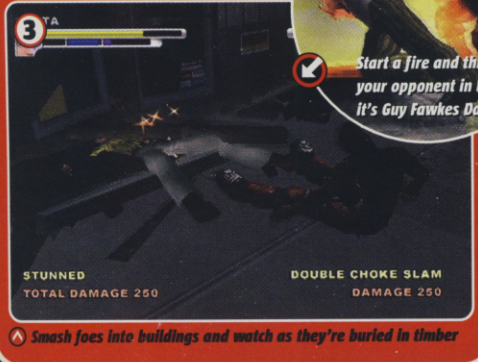
Then make the breasts large... go get 'em cowgirl!

OI, NUTTER!

This game, like the sport, is utterly mental. As well as performing all kinds of potentially bone-snapping manoeuvres (how does elbow-dropping off 25-foot-high roofs sound?), your fighters can beat foes with barbed wire clubs, smash pots over their heads, hell, even set them on fire with gasoline. And don't expect the spectators to hold back when it comes to electrocuting you... eek!

This chef has just been knocked onto the BBQ and wants revenge

Start a fire and throw your opponent in like it's Guy Fawkes Day



Smash foes into buildings and watch as they're buried in timber

Miss Bits gets a right old knees-up. Pun definitely intended...

Commissioner is commissioned a good old hip toss. Take that and party

How much blood? Answer: so much. It makes WWE look fake. Hang on a sec...

CVG OPINION
Difficult to pick up and needs a bit of polishing, but Backyard Wrestling should easily have enough character and violence to become a hit. **Stephen**

WE LOVE
- Lots of blood and grizzly moves
- Tons of unlockable goodies including saucy pop videos

WE HATE
- Frustrating gameplay from the off until you crack the moves
- Dodgy collision detection

EXCITE METER

Genres

You aren't just controlling the plot of a movie...

...You're determining the fate of the world

SCOURGE OF WORLDS

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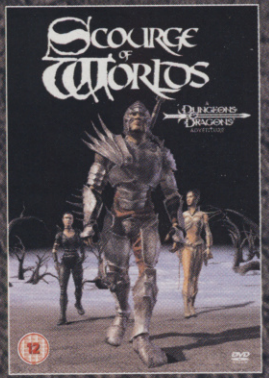

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■ PUBLISHER
ATARI
■ DEVELOPER
EDEN STUDIOS
■ OUT: OCTOBER 31

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Magical action-adventure starring the winsome heroine Kya, thrust into a strange world of peaceful Nativs and evil Wolfen. Use wind tunnels and magic as you bid to save your half-brother from doom.

WWW.ATARI.COM

UPDATE!

Well, g'day sport, know the way back to Oz?

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

Kya seems to be a hybrid of just about every fantasy/fairytale story ever written.

It begins like The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe, briefly turns into Alice In Wonderland, gets in on The Time Machine and swallows a few essential ingredients of classic movies like The NeverEnding Story and Return Of The Jedi, too. Jump into a magical world, rescue your half-brother from an evil overlord (who incidentally turns out to be your father) and restore peaceful harmony to the ultra-cutesy race of the Nativs. It couldn't be any easier...

WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Despite being a generic platform action-adventure at heart, Kya looks like it should have enough to warrant a lengthy look. For a start, it's blessed with large spoonfuls of sugary charm (even more so than Rayman 3, of which this shares many gameplay similarities). The mysterious lands are gorgeously iridescent and the friendly Nativs are some of the cuddliest creatures ever to grace a video game. There are a few other neat ideas too, such as the use of wind tunnels to 'skydive' to new areas and platforms. Add into the equation an emphasis on fighting combos and the ability to outwit nasties using the scenery, and you've got a playable and meaty adventure outing in the offing.

Whether this is going to be strong enough to shake off the competition (the anticipated Beyond Good And Evil, for example) remains to be seen, but we're confident to suggest that it will be more than simply a load of hot wind. Keep those beadies peeled.

WINDY PANTS

The lands you'll encounter are divided by wind tunnels, which you'll need to 'fly' through to access various levels.

The sensation of moving in wind is very convincing, with some excellent graphical effects. The controls will take some getting used to however, but they sure make for a nice alternative to conventional platform jumping.

Jumping into tunnels is like a skydiving extreme sports game

You'll have a few obstacles to avoid. This looks a bit like someone's throat

Pop down to the local shops to purchase some helpful items

Aw, another Nativ. Can I keep him mum, please...?

Hello little Nativ - have a go at making friendly chit-chat with a cuddly creature

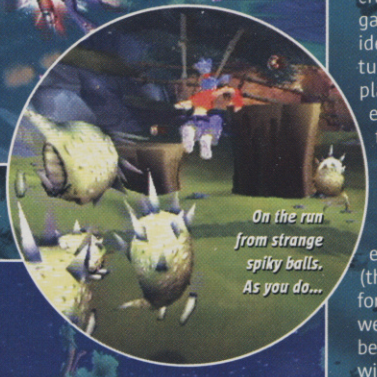
THE EXORCIST

The anarchic Wolfen are the main creatures that you'll have to battle on your travels. However, they're really just Nativs put under the spell of Kya's father, Brazul. And you're there to save them...

Once you've duffed them up, you can exorcise them back to their former selves using magical orbs. This inevitably increases the Nativ population by a few more smiling faces, and enables you to purchase extra goodies in newly opened shops. Yay!

...and hey presto, your very own Nativ. How sweet...

Kya could probably teach Lara a thing or two about fighting



On the run from strange spiky balls. As you do...

Use stealth to sneak past the menacing Wolfen. Shhhhh!

CVG OPINION

Lara Croft meets Rayman with the look of a Rare-developed game. Though it seems tough, it's playable, fun, and pretty to look at, too. **Stephen**

WE LOVE

- Eye-tickling visuals
- Massive, atmospheric levels to stomp and soar around in

WE HATE

- Can be frustrating in places
- Relatively generic action
- Very, very windy

SSX 3

- PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
- DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
- OUT: OCTOBER 24

IN A NUTSHELL

Free-roaming sequel to the top snowboarding game that spins the format on its head, giving you carte blanche to explore three huge peaks and cherry-pick your favourite powder-surfing events at will.

XBOX GC GBA

WWW.EASPORTSBIG.COM

UPDATE!

There's a breathtaking moment in SSX 3 when you launch yourself off the edge of a powdery bluff, soaring so high that you touch the fluffy clouds. You land in a beautiful forest, dappled sunlight caressing the tree trunks. Blissed out, you try a neat little grab trick, just for fun, then some loud-mouthed berk like Moby comes storming past and knocks you flat on your smiling face. Now that's the joy of snowboarding.

THE JOY OF SSX

The SSX core gameplay basics remain the same. You get to race against rival boarders, compete in time trials and one-off Big Challenges and go powder-crazy on the massive trick courses. The controls still feel as instinctive and responsive as ever. The new Uber Tricks category, which introduces Tony Hawk's-style rail tricks, is an exhilarating new feature designed to encourage the creation of insane combo strings. All boarders now have fully customisable stats as well as boards and clothes and there are plenty of other cool modes including online multiplayer and Quick Play options. We've only made it down one mountain, but we can't wait to explore the rest... CVG

PEAK 3
ELEVATION: 6739m
CONDITION: Clear

PEAK 1
ELEVATION: 4105m
CONDITION: Heavy Snowfall

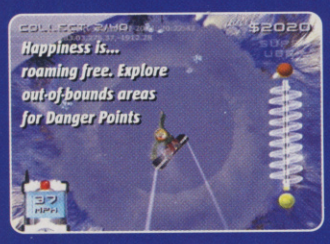
PEAK 2
ELEVATION: 5422m
CONDITION: Clear

MOUNTAIN EXCITEMENT

Big, isn't it? By the end of the game you'll own every frosty inch of those shimmering slopes. But first you have to start small...

On the nursery peak you'll explore the back country runs and unlock Events and Challenges. To gain access to the second and third peaks you'll have to complete at least one of the major goals on each peak, including winning Medals in races and Freestyle events, collecting crystals, earning over $50,000 and completing all of the Big Challenge events. Or if you want you can just go on one big free-ride. It's up to you.

HAPPINESS



SOUTH FACE

Enjoy a frothy latte in the Lodge and customise your board and rider while you're at it

Use the ski lift to take short cuts to other courses on the mountain

CROW'S NEST

R&B

DYSFUNCTION JUNCTION

CVG OPINION

The proper sequel to SSX (Tricky was more of a rehash) is one of the most anticipated games of the year – and it looks like you should believe the hype. **Maura**

WE LOVE
- Breathtaking panoramas
- New tricks, realistic character designs and a kick-ass soundtrack

WE HATE
- Only four new characters
- Starting to look even more like Tony Hawk's on ice

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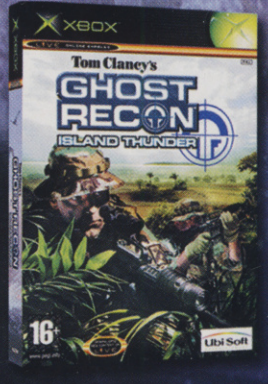

16+ www.pegi.info

Red Storm ENTERTAINMENT

* Xbox Gamer UK April 2003

XBOX LIVE

XBOX

Ubi Soft ENTERTAINMENT

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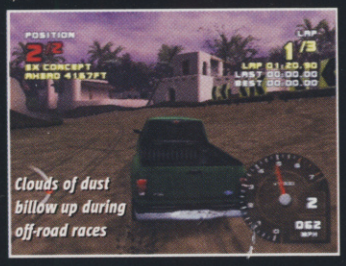

Clouds of dust billow up during off-road races

- PUBLISHER: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE
- DEVELOPER: RAZORWORKS
- OUT: OCTOBER 31

PC
PS2

ONLINE GAMING

WWW.EMPIRE INTERACTIVE.COM/

FORD RACING EVOLUTION

Let's face it – with driving games like Gran Turismo 4 and Colin McRae '04 on the horizon, Ford Racing Revolution won't set the world on fire. But for 15 quid, it's definitely worth a test drive.

Ford Racing Revolution features 32 of the company's most popular motors – from the 1968 Mustang to the latest Mustang GT Concept car – and will test your driving skills in standard races, off-road scrambles and hair-raising chases through twisting city streets. There'll even be a two-player mode for split-screen skirmishes, and the ability to collect a garage full of the finest cars ever made.

Unlocking the game's best cars depends on your success in the challenges, and collecting new motors is the key to winning later races against tough-as-nails AI opponents.

Best of all, the handling is easy and intuitive, making it an ideal alternative for casual racing fans. It may not be the prettiest game around, but Ford Racing Revolution promises to be one of this year's best budget packages. CVG

In this driving challenge you have to hug the red racing line for the entire race

There are loads of cars on offer, from beefy off-road racers to sleek city convertibles

WE LOVE
- Cheap as chips
- Lots of challenges
- Loads of cars

WE HATE
- Boring graphics
- Cheesy music
- Uninspiring courses

EXCITE METER

cvg games

BANJO-KAZOOIE Grunty's Revenge

Banjo and Kazooie admire the cut-down view outside their home

- PUBLISHER: THQ
- DEVELOPER: RARE
- OUT: OCTOBER 17

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Rare's first game for Microsoft, not on Xbox, but Game Boy Advance. Grunty's Revenge is an isometric, puzzle-filled romp with our heroes Banjo and Kazooie once again out to thwart the evil Gruntilda's plans.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

WWW.RARE.CO.UK

Banjo the bear and Kazooie the bird are in a flap because the evil Gruntilda's back and more determined to defeat our heroes than ever before.

Visually Grunty's Revenge may not be as extravagant as the N64 Banjo-Kazooie titles but this GBA version packs in a lot – levels are large and multi-layered, littered with enemies and mini-tasks. There are bosses, mini-games, secrets to find and new moves to learn.

SPREAD YOUR WINGS

Spread over six worlds with more than 60 different tasks, the adventure includes old characters like the witch doctor Mumbo Jumbo who can transform Banjo into different creatures, each with unique abilities which allow him to explore further. Nintendo has surpassed itself this time. CVG

Six worlds to explore and over 60 different tasks... Nice

MINI-MADNESS

Grunty's Revenge is packed full of mini-games that offer laughs and thrills in equal measure. They range from fishing for sheep to games of tag and pirate ship battles. Take a look at these beauties.

Collect the bugs and avoid the spikes on this long slide

Keep hold of the treasure chest the longest to win

Grab sheep with a fishing rod before the timer expires

CVG OPINION

Not as pretty as the N64 titles, but Banjo and Kazooie should make just as much noise when squeezed onto the GBA. This is looking like a winner. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Lots to do and places to explore
- Wacky cast of characters
- Mental mini-games

WE HATE
- Too much text with no speech
- Mini-games better than the main action

EXCITE METER

cvg games

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PlayStation.2

XBOX

MIDWAY

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■ PUBLISHER
CAPCOM
■ DEVELOPER
CAPCOM
■ OUT: NOVEMBER 7

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

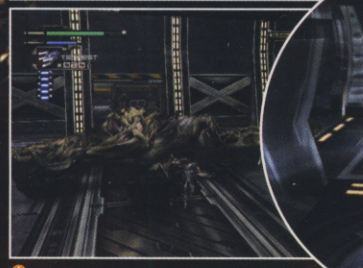
In Capcom's space-bound dino-actioner, urban environments are swapped for a sci-fi setting. The latest in the franchise ramps up the survival elements at the expense of the series' trademark scares.

XBOX

WWW.CAPCOM.COM/DINOCRISIS3

UPDATE!

Zipping around on your jetpack is almost as much fun as killing stuff



The claustrophobic environments make for some hair-raising close encounters

It's a dinosaur! It's in a spaceship!

The map screen is essential if you want to navigate the truly labyrinthine Ozymandius

DINO CRISIS 3

There you are, gnawing on the gnarled carcass you just picked up at the Stego-mart, absent-mindedly sucking the sinew out of your gigantic T-Rex teeth when suddenly you're zapped several millennia into the future and genetically mutated into a big stringy dino-waffle.

It's no surprise the Jurassic reprobates in Capcom's latest Dino Crisis instalment are angry.

Three hundred years later, as Patrick Tyler, member of the S.O.A.R Special Ops, you must explore the desolate space station Ozymandius to discover what happened on board and where the hell the crew disappeared to. Burp.

PHAT CONTROLLER

The radical switch in setting has done more than just freshen up the franchise – it's also pretty much catapulted the game right out of the survival horror genre. With dark menacing corridors replaced by gleaming chrome and twinkling lights, manoeuvring around the game's jaw-dropping environments.

The boost in speed comes in handy with Dino Crisis 3 wielding its hideously mutated and disarmingly crafty dino-pests at every opportunity. Thankfully, Capcom has implemented a gloriously slick control system aiding everything from discovery to decimation.

The only thing likely to get in the way of the hugely atmospheric entertainment at this stage is the aggressively stubborn camera, which tends to prefer pointing out architectural highlights over marauding peril. Handy if you're art boff Brian Sewell, otherwise a bit of a drag. If that's ironed out ready for release though, it might be time to declare the dinosaur hunting season well and truly open. CVG

The dinos aren't picky about which of the playable characters they eat

MUTATION STATION

Sometimes it's good to be a geek...

Dead ends and impassable obstacles can be overcome by tapping into the ship's central computer and triggering one of its many structural transformations.

Reconfigure the ship's layout at one of the mainframe terminals

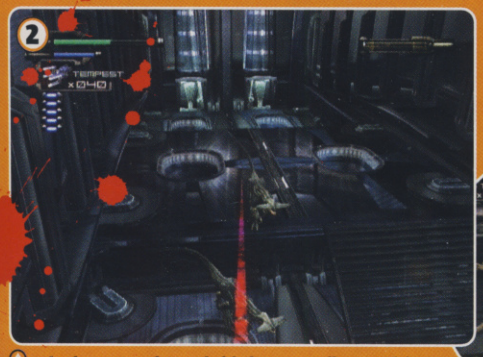
Each transformation will open up a host of new passageways to explore

EYE OF THE TYLER

For more accurate shooting, switch to the game's first-person mode.

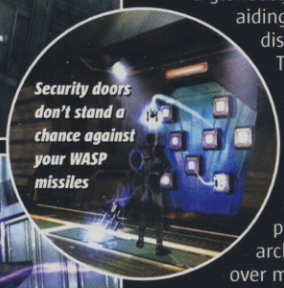
Make sure you're out of reach of snarling jaws though as movement is severely restricted. One of those dinos could easily have your arm off remember, which makes for a poor aim.

If the action starts to get a bit too tense at ground level...

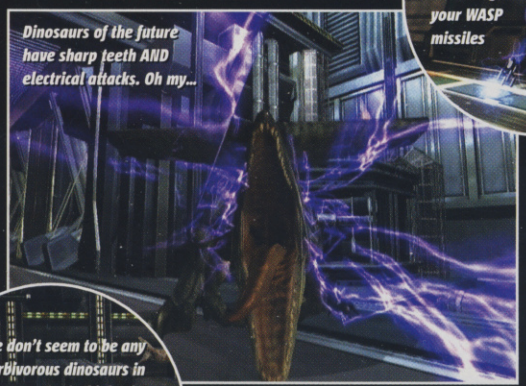


...clamber up to safety and pick the enemy off at your leisure

Later events in the game will necessitate leaving the confines of the ship



Security doors don't stand a chance against your WASP missiles



Dinosaurs of the future have sharp teeth AND electrical attacks. Oh my...

There don't seem to be any herbivorous dinosaurs in this game. Can't think why

the emphasis is more on action, puzzle solving and progression than set pieces and scares. Further sticking the cattle prod in the jockstrap of convention is the addition of your rear-mounted jetpack allowing nippy

CVG OPINION

Gorgeous visuals, intense gun-blazing combat and a menacing sense of space-bound isolation – even if the idea of dinosaurs on a spaceship makes us titter. **Matt**

WE LOVE
- Beautiful environments
- Fast and tense jetpack action
- Elegant controls

WE HATE
- Samey enemies
- The fact it's not scary
- Camera next to useless in battle

GAMES

KIRBY AIR RIDE

Get the timing right or it's diced Kirby... though he deserves it for featuring in this game!

The A button slows the racing Kirby down for corners... and that's about it

Kirby auditions for a part in the next Zelda game

- PUBLISHER NINTENDO
- DEVELOPER HAL
- OUT: NOVEMBER 14

ONLINE GAMING x4

IN A NUTSHELL

That lovable, irrepressible character Kirby turns up in one of the simplest and least demanding games since paper, scissors, stone. And you're expected to shell out hard cash for it, apparently. We'll just see about that.

WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM

Kirby has been as much a staple of Nintendo's output as a certain moustachioed plumber – so we were pleased to see the pink puffball return in a different type of game. Only that 'different' doesn't always mean 'better'.

ONE-BUTTON WONDER

Kirby Air Ride is a no-frills racer featuring two different types of event. The first, Air Ride, takes place in an insane, twisting 3D landscape, while Top Ride opts for a simpler 3D bird's-eye view. These different styles add a little variety to the game but it is the lack of overall depth which is most worrying.

Indeed, its painful simplicity is the game's main problem. Holding down the A button when approaching a bend to slow little Kirby down does not make for a very demanding experience. The City Trial mode is slightly more exciting, requiring you to race against computer characters for power-ups, but our import copy shows that it is extremely basic.

In fact, in the racing modes, it's possible to put the controller down and let Kirby bump and bash his own way round the course. True, you are unlikely to win any races this way, but the fact that you can achieve a moderate level of success without even holding the controller leaves a lot to be desired.

According to Nintendo, Kirby Air Ride is aimed squarely at the younger crowd, so its simplicity can be forgiven to a certain extent. Still, there are plenty of games that cater for the younger gamer without reverting to this level of bird-brained simplicity. Kirby or not, this isn't a title we're awaiting too keenly.

OI! I WAS USING THAT

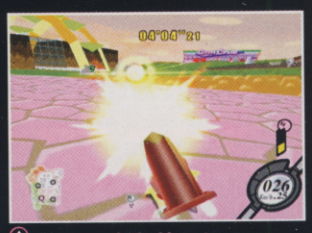
As with all of Kirby's adventures, Kirby Air Ride allows you to steal your foe's attributes and use them against them.

For example, come across a spiky critter and one quick press on the A button will allow you to breathe in his spikes and then launch them out again like a cute, pink claymore mine.

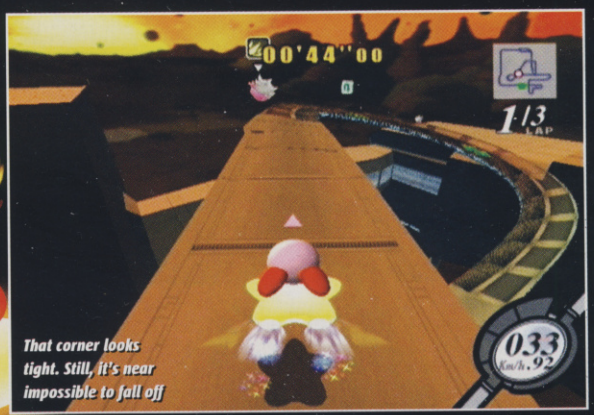
Take a deep breath and suck up your enemy's powers

Then unleash a spiky death on unsuspecting foes

Overtake them or steal their powers



The cannon is the biggest power-up



That corner looks tight. Still, it's near impossible to fall off

CVG OPINION

Okay so it's Kirby, but it's shaping up to be nothing special and needs a good whipping. Looks to be too simplistic and dull for the majority of gamers. **Paul A**

WE LOVE

- Stealing enemy abilities in true Kirby style

WE HATE

- You can't fall off the rails
- Totally lacks any even slightly demanding elements
- Graphics are pretty shabby

CVG GAMES

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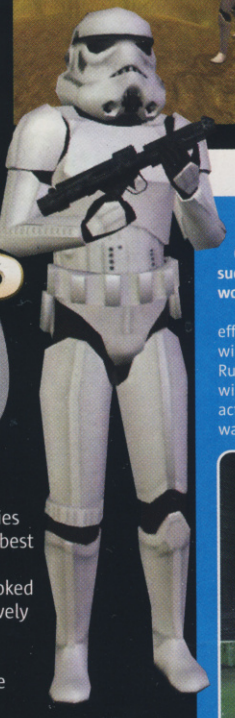
You have to ask if you want to fight other players

STAR WARS GALAXIES

AN EMPIRE DIVIDED

Battles aren't quite as frantic as this would suggest, but we live in hope



PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
VERANT
OUT: DEC, XBOX TBA

ONLINE GAMING | MMO

IN A NUTSHELL

Set just before the Battle Of Hoth, Galaxies allows you to explore the Star Wars universe like never before, as a rogue trader like Han Solo, or as a ruthless bounty hunter under the employ of the Dark Side.

PC CD ROM | XBOX PS2

WWW.STARWARSGALAXIES.COM

You'll be lucky if you get to wield a lightsaber, and zipping down the Death Star trench is out of the question. But if your ultimate Star Wars ambition is to see a dancing troupe of albino Wookiees strut their stuff in the Mos Espa Cantina, welcome to the game of your dreams.

Star Wars Galaxies could be about the best excuse there is for getting yourself hooked on a MMOG (massively multiplayer online game). Played by thousands of people simultaneously, Galaxies allows you to pick from one of eight playable races with the aim to fight and befriend your way into joining either the Rebels or the nefarious Empire. Training to become a Jedi is notoriously difficult, but with starting professions including brawlers, scouts, marksmen, medics, entertainers and artisans, there is ample scope to explore and develop until you join or set yourself up with a guild of player characters.

CAN I SHOOT YOU?

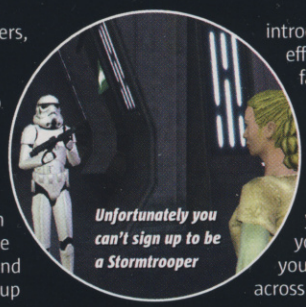
Combat is in real time, and although early on you'll be spending your time hunting what appear to be rabbits and frogs, later you can expect to join up with other players to kill the massive Krayt Dragons that roam the deserts of Tatooine. However if you want to indiscriminately kill and pillage you're sure to be disappointed; as with Verant's other MMOG EverQuest, player versus player combat is consensual – you have to ask nicely if you want to attack another player (unless you are in designated battlefields or are a member of either the Alliance or the Empire).

For those of us who've yet to experience an online RPG, Star Wars Galaxies is thankfully a less daunting introduction than most PC-based efforts, partly because it offers a familiar and friendly universe to explore. If you want to be rich, be an artisan. If you want to hunt, be a marksman. If you just want to shake your shaggy behind in some seedy bar, well, yes, you can do that too, though you'll have to find out how for yourself when the game goes live across Europe later this year. CVG

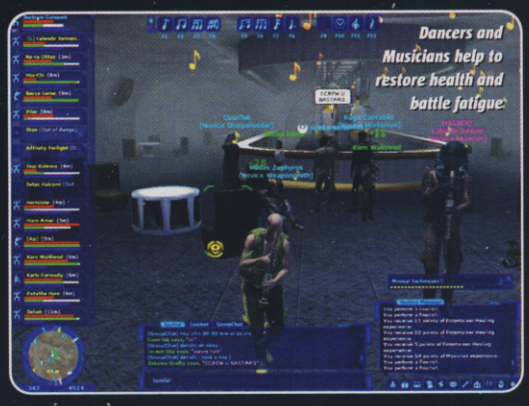
You can't fly ships just yet, not until next year, when the Space Expansion will be released

"Excuse me, do you have any soap?"

You'll have to complete some tricky missions if you want to meet Princess Leia for a drink



Unfortunately you can't sign up to be a Stormtrooper



Dancers and Musicians help to restore health and battle fatigue

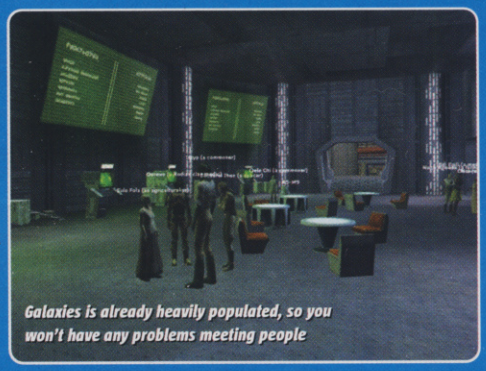
The interface may look complicated, but it's a lot more intuitive than most MMOGs

You meet a lot of strange creatures in MMOGs. He's ugly and he's got the stick to prove it

THE PHANTOM CONSOLE VERSIONS

It was assumed some time ago that Galaxies would eventually appear for the Xbox, and after Verant's success with EverQuest Online Adventures for PS2 (based on their phenomenally successful PC MMOG), hopes were high that Star Wars Galaxies would also make it onto Sony's monolith.

Alas those plans are now on hold as the team put all their efforts into fixing and expanding the PC version, which next year will see the release of the X-Wing-tastic Space Expansion add-on. Rumours persist that when the console version does appear, it will feature the best of both worlds, with third-person ground action and space-based battles. Unfortunately, we may have to wait at least another year.



Galaxies is already heavily populated, so you won't have any problems meeting people

CVG OPINION

After a botched Stateside launch, Galaxies is steadily improving. When it hits these shores it could be the biggest online RPG on the planet. **Rich**

WE LOVE

- Player-run economy
- Massive environments
- Epic Empire versus Rebel battles

WE HATE

- Dancing Wookiees
- Limp-wristed PvP combat

computer and video
games

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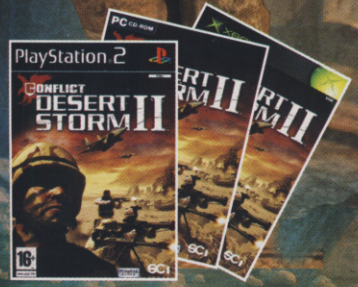

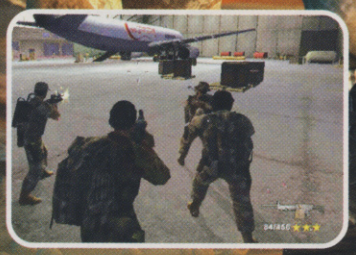

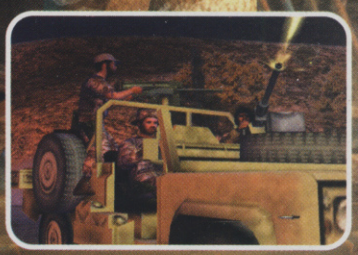

BACK FOR SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS!

XBOX PC CD-ROM PlayStation 2 PIVOTAL GAMES SCi GAMES

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Team CVG visits MTV's London studio to test its game expert's mad skillz

TEAM CVG VS ALEX ZANE

FOR A CHALLENGE THIS COOL WE HAD TO TAKE ALONG EA'S AWESOME SSX 3!

We like to think of ourselves as media darlings here at CVG. Not a day goes by without invitations to fancy-pants parties and celebrity-packed soirées flooding in. So when MTV called us up and challenged us to take on Alex Zane, the presenter of its movie and videogame review show Screenplay, we checked the office diary and found a little gap for them.

"This will be sweet," said Graeme. "We'll waltz in, whip this lad at EA's ace SSX 3, and then schmooze with some pop stars." Just another day at the office, then.

This boy Alex Zane though, turns out he can actually play. "I started my videogaming career with an Acorn Electron in 1984," he said, before listing an impressive array of hardware he had cut his teeth on. Might not be as simple as it seemed...

They're all right, these world-famous celebrities. Alex is our new best mate

Alex busts out the rock and roll as Graeme loses the first round. The man's an SSX master!

Like a gaming pixie, Alex sprinkled magic dust all over his tricks

1 ROUND ONE: SNOW JOKE

In the practice rounds Alex busted out an obscene amount of tricks and checked out SSX3's enhanced trick system. Graeme was too busy trying to spot celebrities. "I think I saw Abs!" he shrieked as he faceplanted into the white stuff again. The first challenge was a straight race down the face of the new three-peaked mountain. Things began well for Graeme, pushing Alex into a snowdrift and scampering away. MTV's finest videogaming star was not to be outdone though, and he romped home in first place with a sparkling trail of wicked tricks in his wake. "I failed my uni exams 'cos I was playing SSX Tricky all the time," he admitted. Who says games don't get you anywhere?

That's definitely Graeme's finger – Alex wasn't really that excited

2 ROUND TWO: THE SLIPPERY SLOPE TO SECOND PLACE

Now it's on. "You might work at MTV and get to hang about with pop stars all day," said Graeme, determination flashing in his eyes, "but I stay in all the time and play games until my eyes bleed." By concentrating on his carves around the sharp curves of the mountainside he built a considerable lead. Back in the pack, Alex had attracted the wrath of the other boarders. "They're picking on me!" he whined, getting pushed around like a nun in a moshpit. Safely ahead of the carnage, Graeme slid smoothly across the finish line in first place. He's done it again!

3 ROUND THREE: RESTORED TO CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

On the mountainside the snow drifted like frosty feathers. In the roasting MTV studio Graeme and Alex were prickled with beads of tense sweat. The gaming pride of two great institutions was on the line. As the trees and rocks thickened however, Graeme began to chip away at the lead. By picking out a way through the trees Alex was unwittingly showing our lad the plum route. The finish line loomed, with Alex and Graeme neck and neck – and then as if carried on the wings of angels, Graeme nipped ahead at the death to snatch glory!

Neither of them can quite believe the result

CHALLENGE CVG WINNER CVG WIN! CHALLENGE CVG WINNER

This looks cosy but they were slapping backs and grunting like real hairy blokes

THE FINAL RESULT: TEAM CVG WIN!

"You came from nowhere!" moaned Alex. While Alex is the undisputed style guru, busting out more tricks than David Blaine, Graeme's determined racing and subtle snow-carving saw him through to victory.

It was the closest finish we've ever seen in a CVG Challenge. "You did a great job, pal," said Graeme. "You are the trick master." "Thanks mate," replied Alex, "but your wicked carves deserve recognition." Overcome by mutual gaming respect the two embraced. That's what we do best at CVG and MTV – spread the love of videogames to the whole world. Rock on!

MUSIC, GAMES & VIDEOS!

We thought Alex might be a bit mince, but he proved that he can talk the talk *and* walk the walk. See, that's what Screenplay is all about – honest opinions on the latest releases by people who really know their stuff. They give the latest games to proper rock and pop stars like the Fun Lovin' Criminals to get their expert opinion on them. After all, what else do they do between gigs?

On top of that, Screenplay covers the latest and hottest new movies and DVDs. It's on every Friday at 5.30pm on MTV, and we're giving it the hardcore CVG seal of approval!

COME ON! HAVE IT!

CHALLENGE CVG ★on tour

We're sick and tired of having people round to the office only for them to get massacred. It's too easy for us, see?

To give you a chance we'll forego our home advantage. We want to bring the pain to your turf! Think you can take on the might of team CVG? Then send in the form, lock down your living room and get ready for a showdown you'll never forget.

★HELLO, MY NAME IS: .....

★BUT YOU MUST CALL ME ..... [nickname] ★AND I'M ..... [age]

★I AM THE BEST AT: ..... [game name]

★MY ADDRESS IS: .....

★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: ..... ★EVENING TELEPHONE NO: .....

★EMAIL: .....

Send to: CVG Reader Challenge, CVG magazine, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD

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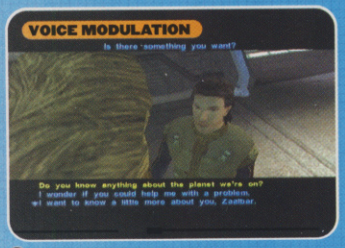
GET THE MOST OUT OF THE GAMES YOU'VE GOT

EXTENDED PLAY

Lost the Force in Knights Of The Old Republic? All boxed in in The Great Escape? Who cares when you can cheat? Didn't anyone ever tell you there are ways, and there are ways...

STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC



Have a second controller plugged into port four. Play the game and press either Black or White to change the pitch of people's voices

Equip the Sith Armour to a party member. That way, when you 'exchange' it for papers you get to keep it - and still get the papers

Equip the Sand People outfits to a party member and you won't lose them after finishing the Sand People section on Tatooine

Equip Bastila with a Jedi robe and she'll be wearing bra and panties when you un-equip her. Equip her with a Dark Jedi robe and when you un-equip her she'll be wearing kinkier underwear

VIEWTIFUL JOE

CAPTAIN BLUE
Finish the game on Ultra V

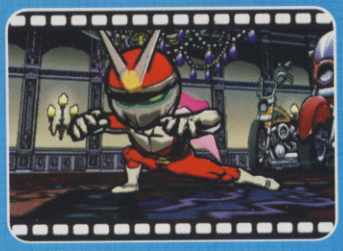
ALASTOR
Finish the game on V Rated

GIRLFRIEND
Finish the game on Adult

ULTRA V RATED MODE
Finish the game on V Rated

V RATED
Finish the game on Adult

VIEWTIFUL JOE WORLD VIDEO
Finish the game on Kids



TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER

Finish all mission objectives in single-player before the cheats are usable. In gameplay press Back and then one of the following:

BIG HEADS
A, X, B, Y, A

BIG BODIES
B, B, Y, X, X, A

CHICKEN EXPLOSIVES
X, X, Y, A, B

PAPER MODE
B, A, X, Y, A

SLOW MODE
Y, Y, B, X, A

HIGH-PITCHED VOICE
X, A, Y, B, X

SILENT HILL 3

DOUGLAS IN PANTS
Beat the game once, highlight New Game Extra and press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Circle, X. Select Difficulties and a sound will confirm entry.

ACTION LEVEL EXTREME
Beat the game on Hard. You can keep beating the game on Extreme as the level goes all the way up to ten.

EXTRA OPTIONS
On the options menu hold down:
L1+R1+L2+R2

FLAMETHROWER
Beat the game twice, or beat it once using ranged rather then melee weapons, to kill as many enemies as possible.

LIGHTSABER
Beat the game by killing enemies using melee weapons rather than ranged weapons.

BRUTE FORCE

CONFED MARINE
At the end of Welcome To The 23rd, look in all the buildings to find the DNA canister that unlocks the confed marine. You can also get this from mission six, The Lonesome Death of Edward Kingman. It's in a building near the end on a desk.

FERAL COLONIST
Shortly after you rescue Brutus on the second mission, look for a door with a crack down the middle in a small room. Blast it open with the shotgun to get the DNA.

FERAL OUTCAST
The DNA can be found to the left just before the foggy valley in Cemetery Gates.

SEER FOLLOWER
In Hunting For Shadoon, take the other path before the second teleporter. You'll find the DNA on an altar.

MILITIA
In Terrorist Ghetto, your mission is to blow up a computer. The DNA is sitting in front of it. You can also get this canister at the end of Super Mutant.

OUTCAST SHAMAN
In Ship Graveyard, there are some huts in the last area. Enter the first hut on the right to get the DNA.

SEER PRIEST
Near the start of Return to Osiris is a large hologram of a head. Walk straight into it to get the DNA.

FERAL SHAMAN
In Chapter 3 of Seers Of The Bayou you will get a choice between crossing a rope bridge or following the path around the tree. Go around the tree and break open the door at the top to get the DNA.

GUNTHAR GHENT
After killing the target in Squirm, look for the DNA in a hut nearby.

SHADOON
At the end of Kill Shadoon, you can get the canister from the corpse of the priest.

FIRE HOUND
At the very end of Abbadon before getting in the extraction teleporter, walk to the edge of the lava and look around for the DNA.

MCTAVISH
In Seti 2049, after you kill McTavish you can find his DNA in the same area.

SHRIKE SOLDIER
Look in the tunnel (where the ship blasts off from) at the very end of Hostile Reception to find the DNA.

YOUR BEST TIPS

If you've got a star-quality tip that you want to share or if you'd like our resident expert Barny to answer a query, send it into us at:

CVGTIPS@DENNIS.CO.UK

EXTENDED PLAY TIPS,
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SHRIKE HEAVY
In Ripe for Plunder, towards the end is a building with the last weapon crate inside. Blow up the door in here and you'll find the DNA behind it.

SHRIKE HOUND
In Shrike Rogues, get onto the roof of the temple and you'll find the DNA.

HUNTER LORD
At the very end of The Anvil, when you find the shield projectors at the back, jump across to the ledge behind the back one and you'll find the DNA.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

LEVEL SELECT
At the main menu press:
Y, R, Y, X, Y, R, X, L, X, X, X, Y

AMMO AND HEALTH
With a gun and health kit in your inventory pause the game and press:
Y, X, L, R, L, R, X, Y, L, Y, Y, R

FMV
At the main menu press:
L, L, Y, X, X, R, R, Y, Y, X, L, R

THE GREAT ESCAPE

LEVEL SELECT
At the main menu press Square, L2, Square, R2, Circle, R1, Circle, L1, L2, R2, Circle, Square

AMMO AND HEALTH
With a gun and health pack in your inventory pause the game and press Square, Circle, L2, R1, R2, L1, Circle, Square, L1, R1, L1, R1

FMV
At the main menu press L2, L1, Square, Circle, Circle R2, R1, Square, Square, Circle, L1, R1

OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL

ALL CHARACTER
At the character select screen in Exhibition mode hold L1 and press Left, White, Right, White.

BIG BOOBIE MODE
During gameplay in Exhibition hold down L1 and tap in B, Up, Up, B, Y

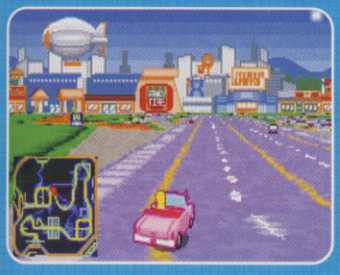
BIG HEADS
During game play in Exhibition hold down L1 and press B, A, B, Y

MAX STATS
During gameplay in Exhibition hold down R1 and press Left, White, Right, White

TIME BOMBS
During game play in Exhibition hold down L1 and press A, B, B, Y, A+X

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

In the password screen, to unlock nearly everything enter: Maggie, Willy, Bart, Chief Wiggum, Apu, Moe, Krusty, Barney



SPACE CHANNEL 5: ULALA'S COSMIC ATTACK

AUTOMATIC MODE
During gameplay hold down L+R then quickly press Up, Left, A, Left, A, Down, Right, B, Right, B

DEAD TO RIGHTS

Enter the following codes at the new game screen to open a variety of options:

MASTER CODE
Hold L1, L2, R1, and R2 and then press Down, Left, Down, Triangle, Down

LEVEL SELECT
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Down, Left, Down, Triangle, Down

10,000 BULLETS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Up, Left, Down, Right, Circle

ARMOR
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Up, Up, Up, Square, Down

HUMAN SHIELDS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Square, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Square

INVISIBLE
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Triangle, Triangle, Up, Up, Triangle

STRONGER MELEE ATTACKS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Down, Circle, Left, Left, Left

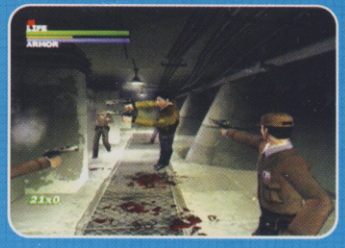
ONE-SHOT KILLS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Triangle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Left

ADRENALIN
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Left, Right, Left, Circle, Square

DUEL GUNCONS
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Triangle, Circle, Up, Up, Up

HEALTH
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Square, Triangle, Left, up, Right

DISARMED ENEMIES
Hold L1, L2, R1, R2 and then press Right, Square, Left, Circle, Triangle



GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE

The following useful tips were sent in by reader Jake from London:

BONUS DUNGEON
Get all the Djinni from Golden Sun and Golden Sun 2, and go to Contigo and use the teleporter in the circle in the middle of town.

HARD MODE
With a clear Data file and an Empty file select New Game. After transferring data, refuse to play Easy and then select Hard.

REALLY STUCK?

Absolutely stumped on a game? Ridiculed by your mates? There is hope:

THE COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES TIPS HELPLINE.
0906 466 4659

Open seven days a week, 8am-11pm. On the very rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team, who guarantees to find you an answer within 24 hours.
Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does before calling. In case of problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6155.

BARNY'S PROBLEM CORNER

Is your brow furrowing into a deep crease? Let Barny sort out all your problems. He's not much cop at girl questions, though

MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER

Q. In Gun For Hire I'm meant to blow up this teleporter where the aliens are coming from. I've found the teleporter and aliens keep coming out, but I can't blow it up.
Anon, via email

A. *You're probably trying to blow up one of the sub-teleporters and they can't be destroyed. To find the main teleporter (which feeds the others), go through the door on the right in the lower half of the large room filled with steam (it has a sub-teleporter in it). Just past the swimming pool there's another room. At the back of here there's a small alcove with a steam valve in it. Turn the valve, then head back to the large room with the sub-teleporter in. Go through the door you just opened which is at the back of the room. Shortly afterwards you will find the main teleporter – you can destroy it with a few rockets.*

MAX PAYNE

Q. Help me! I'm stuck in Part Two of Max Payne. I've just started this bit where everything catches fire and I die all the time. There's no way through the flames and no way back either. Do you think this is a bug or am I missing something obvious?
Anon, via email

A. *This bit's just hard – you need to be able to run through the flaming rooms very quickly. Go through the door next to the bar, and then speed over to the door really fast. Bookcases will fall over in the next room, so open the grey door on the right. You have to be very quick otherwise the bookshelves will fall over, blocking the way and causing you to die. If you just run through this section in one fluid motion you should make it easily.*

STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

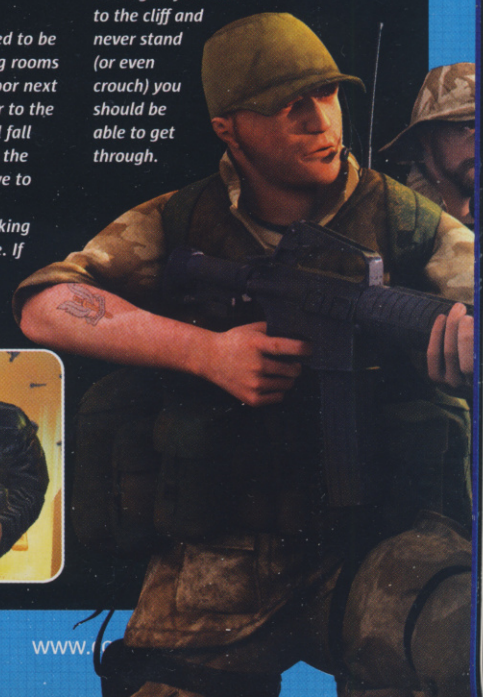
Q. I'm in Yavin trying to learn the ways of the Force in the temple, but I don't know what to do. I'm right at the end where I can see my lightsaber in a cage, but I can't get it no matter what I do.
Jon, Devon

A. *Use Force Push to push away the poles holding it up so that the cage comes down. Then find the platform at the back of the area. There should be a large floor switch you can stand on. Stand on this. When it reaches the bottom use Force Speed and run towards the lightsaber. When you are halfway there you must switch to Force Pull and yank the lightsaber into your hand before the cage closes again.*

CONFLICT DESERT STORM

Q. I'm stuck on the first level where I have to rescue my mate from the Iraqi soldiers. I'm meant to get there without raising the alarm, but I always get spotted and killed when I try to cross the bridge.
James Tims, Kent

A. *Instead of crossing the bridge you should head right and go underneath it. There is a tank rumbling around down here, but if you cross to the far side and crawl along right next to the cliffside it won't notice you. Sometimes you will be spotted by a man on the clifftop, but so long as you stick to the cliff and never stand (or even crouch) you should be able to get through.*



SOULCALIBUR II PLAYER'S GUIDE

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee, courtesy of CVG. We show you the best moves and fighters to take your opponents down

1 UNLOCKING STUFF

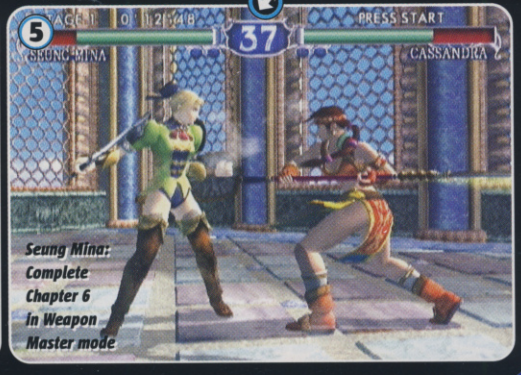
Beating Arcade 20 times won't unlock much. Instead, you have to play through Weapon Master mode. You can interchange characters as much as you like, but to get your hands on the weapons and five unlockable characters, you must complete all of Weapon Master mode – including sub-chapters and extra chapters. Only then will you be able to buy weapons from each location.

For Yoshimitsu: Finish Chapter 2 in Weapon Master mode. The thing that's a bit special about Yoshimitsu is that he swears a lot. Sweet boy

For Cervantes, complete Chapter 3 in Weapon Master mode

Sophitia: Complete Chapter 4 in Weapon Master mode

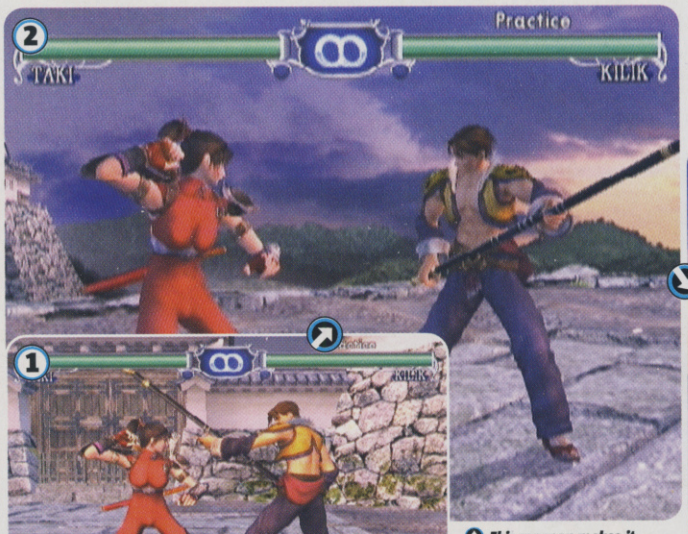
Charade: After beating chapter 2, beat the first mission in Chapter 3



Seung Mina: Complete Chapter 6 in Weapon Master mode

2 MOVING

Moving in all directions is easier in Soulcalibur then just about any other fighting game. If all you've played is Tekken and Street Fighter, then you won't be accustomed to moving around, as you'll be more used to being toe to toe with your rival. Simply push up or down (back or forward) to move around your opponent. If you know they are about to strike, you can use this instead of blocking to avoid most attacks. Once your opponent has made their attack and you've moved out of the way, they'll be facing the wrong direction. Now that they're defenceless, lay into them with your cheapest moves. The sight of their rival circling around them can also upset an opponent who is frustrating you with a good defence. You also have access to a variety of attacks while on the move.



This weapon makes it more difficult to hit Taki

Taki uses her speed to move around the arena

Kilik misses completely and is now facing in the wrong direction and open to an attack

3 HIT THEM WHEN THEY'RE DOWN

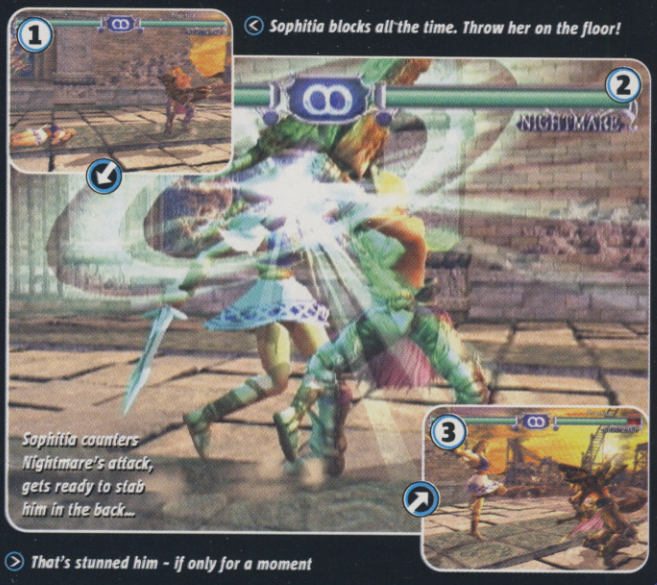
If you manage to knock your opponent to the floor, don't forget to rush over and do a follow-up attack while they're on the deck. Get in a good position and you can knock them right back down again as they try to get up, and then launch into another ground attack. If you don't fancy rushing over to put the boot in, then use the time to prepare for your next attack. This is a good point to start any moves that take a second or two to charge. If you're the one on the ground, then you can roll around and get up attacking if your rival is standing over you.

Spawn's Shadow Stalker leaves Maxi on the floor

As soon as Maxi is back up - down he goes again!

4 BLOCKING

If you want to win a fight, you need to know how to block. You can block nearly every move that's thrown at you (except throws of course). In terms of the moves that are unblockable, you can usually see these coming a mile away. Blocking low or high attacks takes practice, so set the CPU to its highest difficulty and see how long you last. This is a good time to practice countering (G+Dpad Forward or Back). Time this correctly and you can turn an attacker's thrust away leaving them open to a counter-attack.



Sophitia blocks all the time. Throw her on the floor!

That's stunned him - if only for a moment

5 KICKING

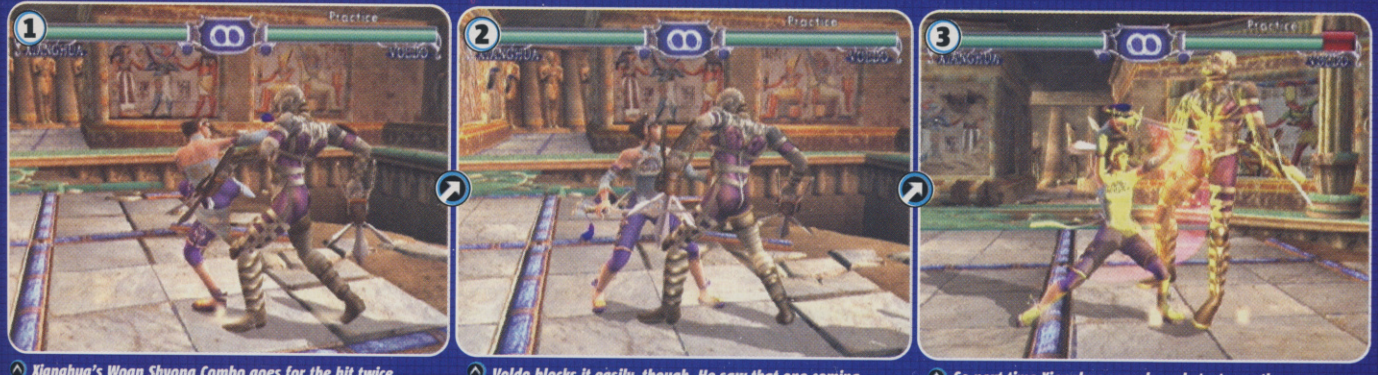
This might be a weapon-based game but don't forget to use your feet. Some characters like Taki are good at kicking and some – like stump leg Mitsurugi – are not. The main benefit of kicking is speed. Most kicking moves take little preparation – so opponents won't see it coming. Good defenders can often be caught out by low-hitting kick attacks to their shins. It won't do much damage, but you can repeat until they start blocking low – then start laying in with the high attacks. Remember, good kickers like Yungsung and Taki can win rounds with their feet.

Leg Sweep catches Ivy by surprise

Yungsung follows with a Roundhouse Kick

6 FEINTING AND CANCELLING

This is when you stop an attack at the last minute. It's handy for stopping moves mid-flow if you see your opponent has moved away, or is performing an attacking move that might hit you first. If you look through a fighter's command list, you can cancel different series of attacks by pressing G. If you get good at performing a certain series of moves such as Rising Bo Feint by Kilik, then being able to cancel movements is a good way of unsettling an opponent, putting them off their guard.



Xianghua's Woan Shyong Combo goes for the hit twice...

Voldo blocks it easily, though. He saw that one coming...

So next time Xianghua cancels and starts another move

7 ESSENTIAL COMBOS

MITSURUGI

1 RELIC Back+A+B: This will make Mitsurugi place his sword back in his sheath. Pressing any button now will unleash a very quick attack. Pressing A+B in Relic will enable Bill of Fire to carry out an unblockable move. Hold down the buttons for greater power.

2 DIVIDING THRUST A+K: You need to be up close. If you perform this move while your opponent is at the ringside, an unblocked hit will see Mitsurugi kick the other character out of the arena as he pulls his sword.

SPAWN (XBOX ONLY)

1 NECRO BLAST Back+A+B: This is a great long-range fireball. If you hold the buttons down while doing it he will perform a longer but more powerful version. This can also be done in the air when using Levitation. Holding down A+B in the air will perform an unblockable Necro Blast.

2 LEVITATION B+K: This makes Spawn float in the air. From here you can perform a variety of great attacks, such as pressing K to perform a quick diagonally downwards strike to hit from a distance.

NECRID

1 ELDER TOPAZ Down, Diagonal/Back/Down/Back will start Necrid's powerful attacks. As you perform the Dpad movement, press A if you're close to your opponent, or B if you're at a distance. Pressing K, K, K will perform a neat little combo but leave you on the floor.

2 GRAND VALOUR Down, Up, A, B: Do this near the edge of the arena and you stand a good chance of throwing your rival out. If not, your opponent should be a good distance away and on the floor so follow up with a long-range attack such as Void Cannon (B+K).

TAKI

1 WIND ROLL B+K makes Taki roll forwards from which you have a few good options such as B, B, B for Wind Stealing Rush. You can also go into the Possession stance and perform the unblockable Exorcism (A+B).

2 ASSASSIN'S STRIKE Forward, Forward, B: This is a very easy move to pull off but it's great at taking opponents by surprise as it's very quick. Taki is very fast and can leap behind with Stalker (A+B). If you use the red outfit her juggling breasts will put the DOA girls to shame.

TALIM

1 TORNADO ASSAULT KAMAY Hold Back, A, A, A, Down, Diagonal/Forward/Down, B: This move is quick and difficult to detect as it starts with a step backwards. It dishes out a decent amount of punishment and can knock your opponent back and out of the ring.

2 WIND CHARMER Any direction (except forwards or backwards) B+K: This is a quick sidestep to get behind your rival. As soon as you've finished the move you are free to get in a quick attack or throw.

CASSANDRA

1 ANGEL'S WRATH Down, Diagonal/Down/Back, Back B: This is a good move for surprising people, as Cassandra seems to step away and turn around before unleashing the attack. Opponents instinctively let their guard down when she starts performing this one, only to be soundly smacked a second later.

2 GUARDIAN STRIKE Down, B, B, K: Use this whenever your opponent's back is to the edge of the arena. A successful attack from this position can often send the defender flying backwards and out of the ring or into the wall. It hurts too, which is always a bonus.

YUNSUNG

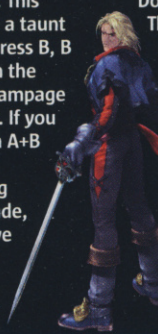
1 RAGING PANTHER Forwards, K, K, A, A: Nothing fancy about this but it hits high, middle and low, making it pretty damn hard to defend against. The trick is to focus on pressing the buttons in a fluid motion, rather than watching the actions of the character.

2 LAND WALK Down, Diagonally/Down/Back, Back: This neat movement will step you backwards slightly but you can perform Lightning Kicks by adding K, K, K, or Coiling Viper thrust by adding B+K.

RAPHAEL

1 QUICK PARADE Diagonal/Down/Back, A+B: This seems like a taunt but then press B, B to perform the Stocatta Rampage Crescendo. If you hold down A+B while performing Quick Parade, you'll move around your opponent.

2 RETREAT STEP Down, Diagonal/Down/Back/Back: This is one of Raphael's sneakiest manoeuvres, providing a platform for unleashing a few different fast attacks. Press K afterwards to do a nice little Pirouette Kick.



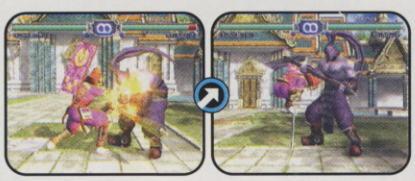
KILIK

1 TRIBUTE Down, Diagonal/Down/Back, Back: Kilik does the splits to lower himself to the ground – there he can make a few different attacks to unsettle his opponents. Follow the Tribute with any other attack.

2 PHOENIX RAGE THRUST Back, B: This is effective at short to medium range and is a great opening move. This is because the distance between players at the start is perfect for it. It has the added bonus of knocking the other player backwards onto the floor, and if they happen to be near the edge – out they go.

8 UNLOCKABLE CHARACTERS

YOSHIMITSU



SWORD SPIRIT MID Forward, B: This is a very simple move but it can be easily varied to outwit a good defender. Yoshimitsu swears as he performs this and no wonder – we've seen it used a lot and it's fooled us almost every time so far. Argh.

SWORD POGO Press A+B and Yoshimitsu pogos on his sword. From here he can do all sorts of wacky moves such as Pogo Rush (Forward, A+B). The sheer number of different moves should ensure that your rival is never quite sure what's coming next.

CERVANTES

DREAD CHARGE Down, Diagonal/Back/Down, Back: Cervantes charges up as if to unleash his unblockable Dread Slash (Press A after Dread Charge). However, he can quickly switch to a different move such as the Dash Flare where he leaps high and comes down hard.

ETERNAL CURSE Diagonal/Down/Back, A+B: Cervantes had a few unblockable moves that are easy to perform, making him seem a bit cheap. All these moves start with a give-away energy charge, so expect them to work on anyone with slow reactions.

CHARADE

Charade is a pot luck character that randomly takes on the weapons and characteristics of another fighter, so you're never sure what you're going to get. If you're confident playing any character then choose Charade. If not, don't pick her until you're a better player.

XIANGHUA

1 MEI HUA CARVE A+B, Down, B: This hits low, high, and low so it's very difficult to defend against as it's so fast. If your rival gets the hang of it then you can vary the move by not pressing Down and adding A or B.

2 ANGRY SHUI SHIAN Diagonal/Forward/Down, A, K. This is another move that's fast and strikes from low to high in a few swift moments. Unlike Mei Hua Carve, your rival won't see it coming, so it's a nice one to have in your party bag.

MAXI

1 FURY RIGHT OUTER B+K, B, B, B, A: Maxi is the button basher's fighter of choice as he can perform a lot of multiple-hit moves. This one is easy to pull off and finishes with knocking the other player into the air and onto the floor – where you can follow up if you're quick enough.

2 DANDY SURPRISE BEHIND LOWER Down, Diagonal/Forward/Down, Forward, A: This is very easy to do and works well. Attacking an opponent's feet all the time does have the benefit of making them block low, allowing you to strike high.

NIGHTMARE

1 NIGHT BEHIND STANCE B+K: Nightmare has a lot of these stances, and when he moves into one you never know which one it's going to be. Furthermore, these moves are swift – such as Cross Grinder that hits low to high.

2 MAIL SPLITTER B: This is the move that people playing Nightmare use most often. It's quite cheap, as you don't need to be too close to your opponent. It's fairly quick and does lots of damage while knocking the recipient to the floor.

IVY

1 PLEASURE CHARGE B+K: Ivy's sword changes into a metal whip giving her longer range. Then press any combination of buttons e.g. A+B (Venom Strike) for a powerful attack.

2 SPIRAL SERENADE A+B: Ivy changes her sword into a whip. Press B, B, B, to perform Mistress Justice. Ivy can link together stances and weapon states to perform chains of attacks. After performing a Spiral Serenade attack, she'll still be spinning her whip, ready for the next command.

ASTAROTH

1 POSEIDON TIDE Down, Diagonal/Down/Back, Back, A: Astaroth seems to have less moves, but makes up for it in sheer power and range. His huge axe can reach a long way – use it to keep quicker fighters from getting in too close.

2 BULL RUSH Forward, Forward, K: This is more of a headbutt, where Astaroth charges forward. Holding down the buttons will result in a slight pause, if your opponent looks likely to defend. Catch them and it will knock your rival to the floor.

VOLDO

1 RAT KICK Down, K: Voldo is one of the oddest characters in the game. He has a lot of moves like this, that are hysterical to watch – especially when repeated. Due to the unusual way he contorts his body, it's quite hard to be sure what he's going to do next – and you might be laughing too much to even care.

2 MANTIS CRAWL Diagonal/Down/Forward, A+K: This stance puts Voldo in an odd position, from which he can perform moves such as Mantis Fire Dance (Forward, Forward) where he walks over a rival. Add Down, Up, B, B, B and he'll belly flop attack from the floor.

HEIHACHI (PS2 ONLY)

1 10-HIT COMBO A+B+K, Diagonal/Down/Forward, K, B, A, K, K, B, K, B, A, K: If you practice from now until the end of the month you might be able to pull one of these off in a fight. If you do manage it they do a lot of damage, hitting both low and high repeatedly. Defence is almost impossible.

2 THUNDER TWIN HAMMER A, A, B: If 10-hit mega-combos are just completely beyond you, then Heihachi has loads of easier-to-pull-off fast combos. This one is very easy to perform and very quick to execute. What could be easier than A, A, B? It's good for hitting anyone attempting a more long-winded move. And you don't need to stay up all night learning how to do it.

LINK (GAMECUBE ONLY)

1 ARROW A+B: Link's ranged attacks are quite effective as adding an extra button press determines where they hit your rival. In this way, they'll never be sure if you are going to hit them high or low, so they'll probably want to close the gap quickly.

2 BOOMERANG B+K: This is Link's best stance as sidestepping to avoid an attack is pretty difficult. It's nifty too – Link can throw his Boomerang sideways to catch quick-footed opponents off-guard. The attack also hits on the way back (hence the name) so they have to avoid or block that.

SEUNG MINA

LIGHT CRANE A+B: This is a nifty move where Seung Mina rotates her weapon, inflicting light damage but also forming a barrier to keep other fighters back. She can add to it by pressing A, B to make Dancing Crane or A+B to make Heavy Crane – which repeats the move, increasing the damage.

RAPID EARTH Down, A+B: Seung Mina has a variety of good low attacks where you can press a direction with A+B and get different results. Rapid Earth hits the feet multiple times causing light damage, but it's also very quick and good for catching people off-guard who are defending.

SOPHITIA

ANGEL STEP Down, Diagonal/Down/Forward, Forward. This is a short dash that can be doubled to Twin Angel Step by doing the action twice. This is the precursor to lots of small moves such as Angel's Strike (add A, A). She's similar to Cassandra, so being good with one will help with the other.

ANGEL'S SAULT Up, K, Diagonal/Up/Forwards, K. Sophitia does a series of two double kicks, the second of which knocks the other person over. If they are near the edge of the arena they will fall out. This move can be varied easily if your rival looks like they're starting to get the hang of it.

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC PLAYER'S GUIDE

Mastering the Force can be tough, but defeating the Sith is impossible! So let Barny Zoeller give you some advice to get you started and guide you through the hard bits

1 MAKING YOUR CHARACTER

If you make mistakes when designing your character, the only way you will be able to rectify them is to restart. Level 20 is the maximum you can obtain. You don't receive many attribute point upgrades as you progress, so if you're unsure then let the computer assign them. However, keep Constitution and Intelligence low and assign extra points to Strength and Dexterity if you want to be a melee fighter, or to Wisdom if you want to be a powerful Force user. The most important skill you need is Treat Injury – your party members will make up for anything you lack skill-wise. When you choose Feats, don't choose anything that makes you a better blaster. This is because after about five hours' gameplay you become a Jedi and you'll be wanting to use lightsabers and Force powers – so any long-range weapon Feats you have might become redundant. If you want long-range shooters, then rely on party members for them.

The only difference between a female character and a male character is the love interest they've got going in the plot

If you're unsure about character creation be a soldier then a Jedi Guardian later, and have high Strength and Dexterity

2 DARK AND LIGHT

Throughout the game you get the chance to make decisions that affect your Force alignment. If you choose to be nasty to people by threatening, killing and being abusive, you will receive dark points. If you choose to be nice, helpful and charitable you will receive light points. The most immediate difference between the two is that dark side characters tend to be richer. Aside from this, your Force alignment affects the Force powers you choose. If you are a light side character you will be better at using light Force powers such as Heal. If you are dark side then you will be better at using dark powers such as Death or Drain Life. Although a light side character can still choose to choke people to death, they aren't as good at this as dark characters. Always pick neutral Force powers or those corresponding with your alignment. If you want to have Force powers from the alignment opposite to yours, then give them to Jolee when you meet him on Kashyyyk.

Light side Force powers might seem weaker than dark, but they often allow your team to survive longer

Dark side powers are all about inflicting pain and suffering. Drain Life does what it says on the tin, and is particularly nasty

3 CHARACTERS

You can only take two with you at a time. Although a good blaster character can be effective, they require a lot more attention than Force users. Most of the time the best characters to have in your group will be Bastila and Jolee, with Juhani being a replacement for them whenever they're not around. There is little in the game that can withstand being sliced by three Jedis. You'll want a wide range of Force powers in your trio, so if you are a light side player have Jolee use dark Force powers. If you are dark then have Jolee use light – it's as simple as that. The other thing is to make sure someone has Cure rather than Heal, as this is essential. And make sure your main healer keeps a reserve of Force energy at all times – just in case.

Mission is a stealthy character, so give her the best pistols you can find and upgrade pistol-related Feats to the max

Zaalbar should be treated like a walking tank. Choose either melee or long-range weapons and concentrate on that path

Canderous should be equipped with heavy long-range weapons and given the best armour. Upgrade Feats such as Sniper Shot

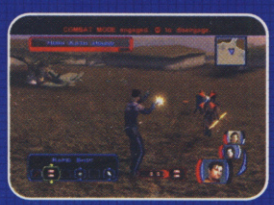
T3-M4 should be reserved mainly for when you need to hack something, so upgrade Intelligence and Computer skills

HK-47 can easily kill meatbags from a distance. Give him all the heaviest droid parts you can find and use Rapid Shot

Bastila should be in your party most of the time. Give her a double-bladed lightsaber, upgrade Dexterity and give her the best light powers

Juhani should have a single saber and Duelling maxed out. Give her enhancing Force powers such as shields and speed

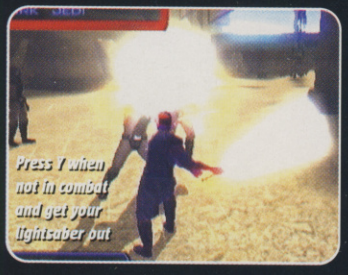
Jolee is neutral so give him dark Force powers (even if your Force alignment is light) and upgrade Wisdom and Charisma

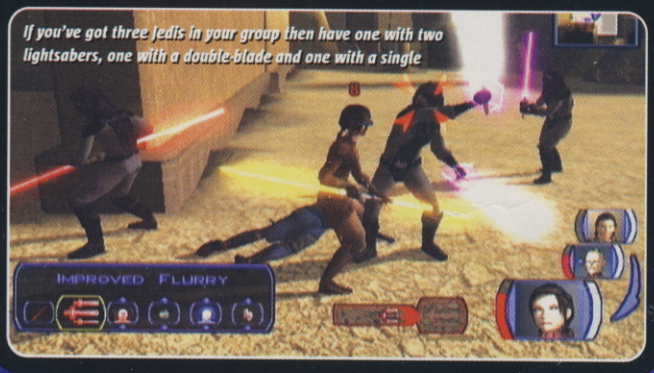


Carth is a decent blaster user. Upgrade Two-Weapon Fighting and Rapid Shot, then give him the best blasters you can find

4 LIGHTSABERS

Sadly, you won't get a lightsaber until you reach the second planet. The colour of your lightsaber makes no difference to its power. You can have either a double-bladed (Darth Maul-style) lightsaber, two single lightsabers or just the one. If you choose double then make sure you improve Two-Hand Weapon Feat to master level, and if you're a single user then improve Duelling. Lightsabers can be upgraded at a workbench to improve them. You will want to put crystals on them that have High Attack (this determines whether you succeed in hitting your target), and High Damage (the amount of damage done should you hit). If you want a purple lightsaber you can find a violet crystal in some rubble on the right-hand side of the Krayt Dragon's cave (after it's dead, obviously) on Tatooine. The Krayt Dragon Pearl is also a good upgrade for your lightsaber. Later in the game you'll want to be putting in Upari, Sigil and Solari crystals to deal out heavy damage.

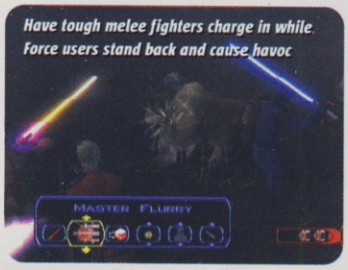




If you've got three Jedis in your group then have one with two lightsabers, one with a double-blade and one with a single

5 COMBAT

Most of the time you won't need to worry about strategies. As long as you never allow yourself to be surrounded by large groups, just let everyone melee attack. For tougher fights, you will have to take direct control of everyone in your party. Before entering a tough fight you should activate your shields and any defensive/enhancing Force powers you have. If you find a fight really hard then activate one of every stimulant as well. If you're fighting a boss who is surrounded by lots of lesser enemies, then use multiple Area Effect Force powers such as Force Storm to weaken the boss while killing off his minions. If the minions are tough, then set your two party members on them one at a time while you keep the boss occupied. Force powers such as Stasis, Stun or Plague are very useful for delaying the enemy. Have one character cast one of these while the other two hack away. You'll win every battle as long as you're careful, and you can help yourself by setting the game to pause after each round of combat.

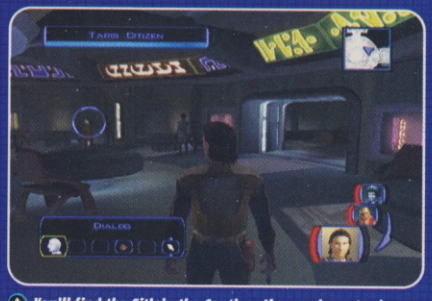


Have tough melee fighters charge in while Force users stand back and cause havoc

If your three main characters have a good mix of Feats and powers you can deal with almost anything

6 TARIS: GETTING A SITH UNIFORM

There are two ways to get a uniform. Talk nicely to the off-duty Sith in the Cantina and agree to go to their party. Head to the North Apartments and walk round until you find the party. Go in and all the Sith will get drunk and pass out, allowing you to grab one of their uniforms. The other way to get a uniform is to go to the North Apartments and talk to the Sith harassing the smuggler. Try and enter the room and they should get angry and attack you. Kill them to get the disguise.



You'll find the Sith in the Cantina. If your character is male, look for a woman. If you're female, look for a fella

7 DANTOOINE: KILLING THE MANDALORIAN LEADER

This is one of the hardest fights in the game, so make sure you switch on your shields, take one of every stim and activate Force powers. As soon as the fight starts, get your whole party to concentrate on the leader. At least one character should have Cure or Heal, so make sure they keep some Force power in reserve. Don't bother trying to stun the boss – just concentrate on hacking away. If you have any Area Effect powers, use these to damage the lesser bad guys. This fight might take a few tries but so long as you take time, pause the game and use Cure/Heal you should win.

You'll encounter a lot of Mandalorians in this game, but this lot are the hardest

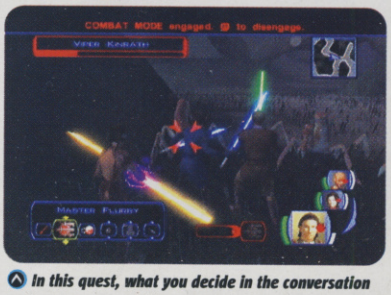
8 TATOOINE: GETTING INTO THE SAND PEOPLE ENCLAVE

You will need a Sand People Uniform for each party member (not droids) that you want to enter the compound. You can get these off the dead bodies of just about everyone you kill. When you're in the enclave, you can fight your way round to the Chief and kill him to get dark Force points, or if you have HK-47, kill the guards in the first area then walk round to the Chief without doing anything suspicious and talk to him.

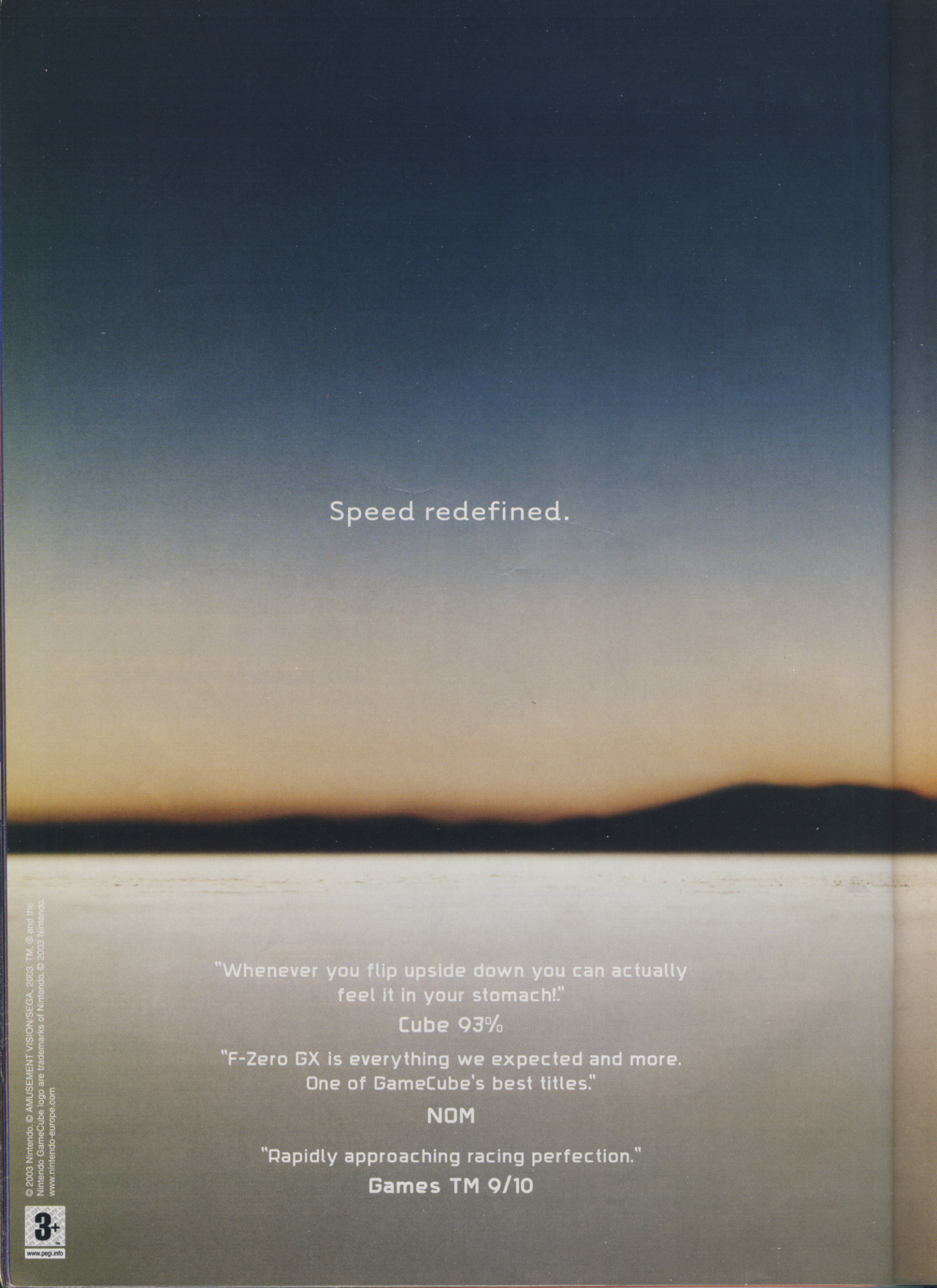
When you dress up in Sand People clothes you don't need to use Gaffi Sticks - so keep your lightsabers

9 KASHYYYK CHIEFTAIN'S QUEST

When you reach the Lower Shadowlands, take the first left you see and look for a Wookiee on the left. After you defeat it – talk to it. Should you decide to be evil you can kill it and return to the Chief to finish his quest. If you want light points, talk to the Wookiee and agree to get the sword. Head north and look for some Viper Kinraths along the way. Get their remains and tie them to the vine in the area at the end. Kill the beast when it arrives and take the blade back to the Wookiee. Return to the chief and then it's up to you to decide who should be chief between Chuundar and his father.



In this quest, what you decide in the conversation will make a huge difference to what you need to do



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REVIEWS

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CVG EXPERT REVIEWERS

Meet the crew with the swiftest fingers who use all their energy to bring you the latest reviews!

Graeme Boyd
BOY ACTION HERO
Last seen shoehorning himself into a shiny red PVC catsuit and riding the kiddie plane rides down the pier in honour of bubble-butted Viewtiful Joe. No really. It's quite a resemblance.

Maura Sutton
CARD ACE/BUFFY FAN
Maura's dream is to find a way of combining Yu-Gi-Oh! with Buffy, perhaps with Buffy Battle Cards™ or Giles landing a guest spot in Yugi's game. "Yes, umm, I've something to tell you, Yugi."

Alex Huhtala
FONT OF WWE KNOWLEDGE
Alex knows so much about wrestling videogames that the games developers ask his advice. Fact. So you can trust his words. That, plus the fact he wields a folding chair like a Ninja.

Mike Cooper
PRO EVO DADDIO
Took time out from the News section and organising Pro Evo championships to play Mario's latest squeeze of the cash udder. He jumped up and down a lot, then came over all nostalgic.

Dave McComb
POWER RANGERS FAN
As a freelance writer with impossibly varied skills, Dave is no stranger to morphing between different forms and mixing his abilities, Alter Echo-stylee. He's even transformed into a sheep to escape 'tea duties'.

CLASH OF THE TITANS

Some of the biggest names in the entire world of entertainment, not just videogames, are going head-to-head this month in a battle royale. International wrestling superstars will be grappling with the card-chucking heroes in Yu-Gi-Oh! and hoping they don't get paper cuts.

Buffy and her Slayerettes will be splashing the holy water on Mario and his pals. The winners should take pride of place in your games collection, the losers condemned to a life used as coasters and Frisbees. But what's really exciting about this month's clash of titanic game licences is that there are big surprises in store – all bets are off. A Simpsons game that's actually great fun and a WWE game that's a real let-down? You've never needed our expert reviews so bad!

LEE
Lee Skittrell
Games Editor

THIS MONTH

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WHAT THE SCORES MEAN

CVG only reviews the biggest, best or most significant releases of the month. And our scores are based on one key measure: fun! It's that simple. Here's a breakdown:

1	WHY, GOD, WHY?
2	STINKS. NEVER PLAY THIS
3	A WASTE OF YOUR MONEY
4	MAYBE RENT, NEVER BUY
5	VERY AVERAGE
6	FAIRLY SOLID BUT NOWT SPECIAL
7	TASTY
8	QUALITY GAME. CONSIDER BUYING IT
9	CLASS ON A DISC
10	AN ABSOLUTE MUST THAT DEFINES THE GENRE

CVG AWARDS SYSTEM

These accolades don't get dished out just because a game gets a certain score. They're CVG's way of telling you which are our pet hates and personal favourites.

CVG ESSENTIAL
The most coveted award a game can get. It's worth buying the console to play the game

CVG RECOMMENDED
A damn good game. It may not break the mould, but it's a cut above the rest

CVG GAME OF THE MONTH
Doesn't have to be the highest scorer, but it's CVG's pick of the bunch this month

CVG STINKER
More abominable than a Yeti

CVG GAME OF THE MONTH

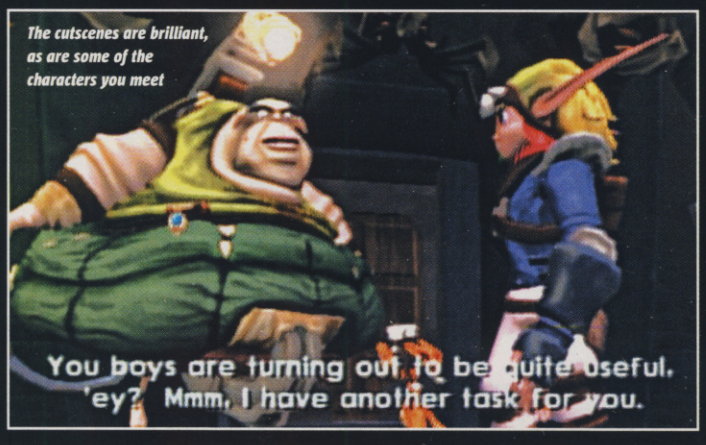
GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING
● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: OCTOBER 17
● PUB: SONY ● DEV: NAUGHTY DOG ● WWW.JAKIIRENEGADE.COM

JAK AND DAXTER DITCH PLATFORMING AND GO FOR FREE-ROAMING THRILLS

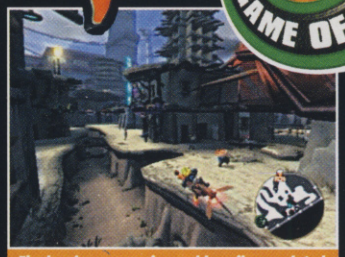
Jak and Daxter are back in a brand new adventure that's unlike any you'll have seen before.

This time you're not exploring peaceful lush green islands but are trapped in a sprawling metropolis 500 years in the future. What's more, Jak is a wanted man, on the run from an evil baron, the ruler of this nightmarish future.

As a sequel, this is as far removed from the original as possible. Sure, it's got lots of similarities and ideas carried over from the first game, but it takes us to places we would never have dreamed of.



The cutscenes are brilliant, as are some of the characters you meet



The levels are massive and heavily populated and you can explore them at your leisure

Getting some shooting practice in one of the many mini-games is vital to hone your skills

The biggest similarity between the two Jaks is the scale. If you thought the size of the first game was impressive, then get ready for even more. The massive metropolis that you'll explore in Jak II is three times the size of the original. When you add 15 different and just as large areas outside the city, it all adds up to a massive world.

PLAYSTATION'S GREATEST HITS

The original Jak may have been packed with pure platforming thrills – items to collect and plenty of precarious jumps – but the sequel adds more. There are still platforming sections but they are cleverly disguised so that you almost don't notice them.

Added to the mix are elements from some of the PS2's other biggest hits. Jak II borrows key elements from GTA and Tony Hawk's. From GTA you have a giant living and breathing city where you can steal any vehicle and speed across the landscape while being hotly pursued by officers of the the local law enforcement. This isn't 1980s Miami you're playing in, but a futuristic city with hover-cars and laser guns. The designers have added hover-boards and the best elements of Tony Hawk's into the equation with acres of scenery constructed so that you can trick your way around the city.

FUTURISTIC PLAYGROUND

Taking another trick from GTA, the game has a mission-based structure with Jak running errands for the residents of Haven City. Like GTA, the diversity of the missions and the new

DON'T GIVE IN TO THE DARK SIDE, JAK!

One story element in Jak II is that Jak has been imprisoned for two years by the evil Baron of Haven City. During his incarceration Jak has been experimented on, injected with large doses of Dark Eco.

This plays a part throughout the game as Jak now has a pumped-up, Hulked-out alter-ego known as Dark Jak that's stronger than regular Jak. He also has a new set of moves and can learn more from The Oracle.

A regular-looking Jak is about to get nasty as his body transforms

Jak's weak body feasts on the Dark Eco and he powers up

Now Dark Jak has extra power to hurt the guards and escape

Dark Jak learns more of his new abilities from The Oracle

A range of new energy effects are awesome

There are several platform sections in Jak II, but they're all pretty cleverly concealed

Jak ventures into the city sewers to run an errand. Watch out for the rats!

IN A BOTHER? GO STEAL A HOVER!

Just like GTA, if you want to get around in Jak II then you'll want to steal a vehicle. The streets are full of pedestrians and patrolling armed guards.

The skies however, are littered with flying vehicles that can all be taken for a spin. All Jak has to do is jump and grab the driver and then pilot the stolen craft to safety.

Some ships like the guard patrol cars even have a range of built-in weapons

Don't hang about - grab the driver to steal their vehicle, then make off sharpish!

One new hover-owner coming right up!

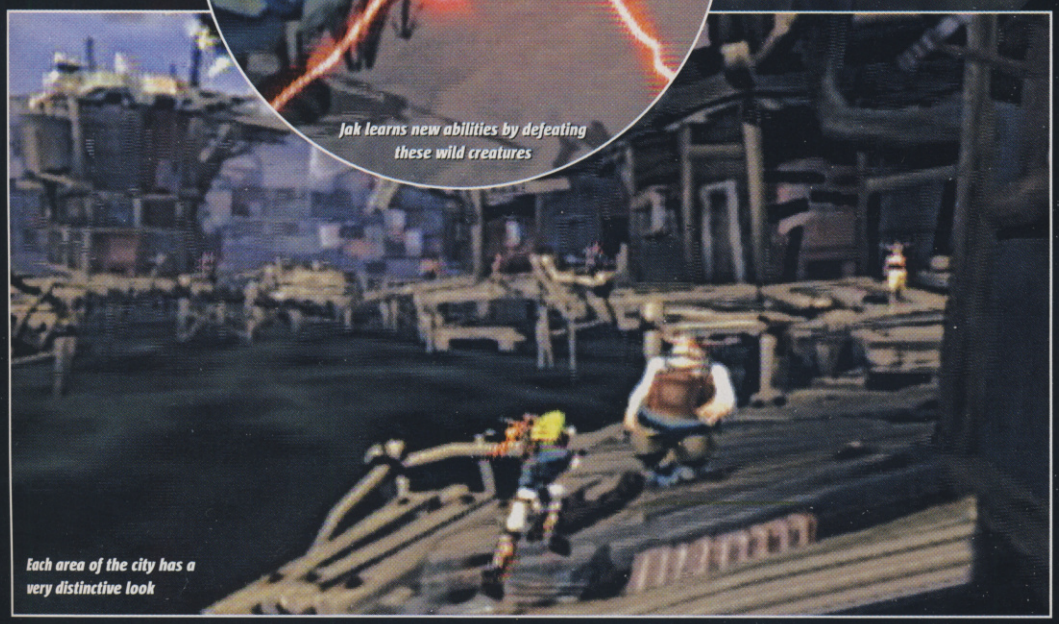
Daxter gets used like a sword when Jak's ammo runs out. Erk!

areas which are opened up on these errands will make you want to play to the end.

Add to this Daxter's gallows humour that, unlike most game 'humour', actually makes you laugh, side missions, mini-games, a strong story and so much to see and do we just don't have the space. We haven't even got room to mention Dark Jak!

So it's bigger, more diverse and considerably different enough to purchase even if you have the original. But how does it play? The answer is surprisingly well. Despite straying from the formula of the original, the added elements feel completely at home in the world of Jak & Daxter (even if they're not in *their* world).

Jak learns new abilities by defeating these wild creatures



Each area of the city has a very distinctive look

It's handy when empty vehicles are parked on the street. They're just asking to be nicked

Computer and Video Games VERDICT

Jak II manages to achieve the impossible, by being both a different game to the original but still appealing to fans. It's large, ambitious and full of surprises – it's a winner! **Alex H**

- ■ A massive futuristic playground
- ■ Uses many different elements successfully
- ■ Daxter gets his own levels

- ■ Not enough boss battles
- ■ Hooker-free Haven City
- ■ Not as much freedom as GTA

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Jak And Daxter (PS2) ■ Ratchet & Clank (PS2)

Mario proves that he's the king of the all-in-one comedy animal romper suit

SUPER MARIO BROS 3

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4

GAME INFO

ONLINE GAMING

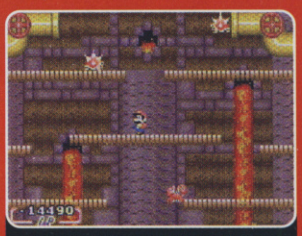
● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-2 ● OUT: OCTOBER 17

● PUB: NINTENDO ● DEV: NINTENDO ● WWW.GAMEBOY.COM/COLLECTION

ENOUGH ALREADY

Every time a new Super Mario Advance title appears it comes with the same Mario Bros mini-game thrown in.

That's just plain crap, and we've had enough. It's such a cop out. Boo!



Come on Nintendo, pull your finger out and give us something new!

Piranha Plants, Koopas and question mark blocks. It's classic Mario action all the way

Mario doesn't look that impressed by their totem pole impression. It's quite good though

You can't even go back and play the old levels once you've completed them

Looks-wise it isn't quite in the same league as Super Mario World

NINTENDO SURPRISES US WITH ALL NEW MARIO GAME. YEAH RIGHT!

REVIEWER

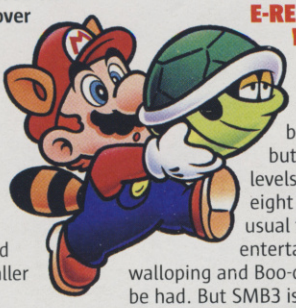
MIKE COOPER

Talk about a nice little earner. Nintendo landed on an Everest-sized pile of wonga after Super Mario Bros 3 was first released on NES back in 1990. It made over $500 million worldwide! That's almost as much as our Alex spends on whiffy hair wax every month.

Eager to squeeze even more pennies out of its Mario-shaped money machine, SMB3 was revived three years later in All-Stars for SNES. However, it bagged the big N a significantly smaller bag-o-cash.

Ten years on and here it is again, this time on GBA. The term 'flogging a dead raccoon-suited plumber' comes to mind. Only this time we're even less keen to hand over our hard-earned notes.

Fair enough, it *was* a brilliant game 13 years ago, but since then the vastly superior Super Mario World has set the new benchmark for 2D platform game paradise. So considering that this is already available for GBA, there's little reason to fork out for an inferior turtle-squishing excursion.



E-READER! WHAT E-READER?

It's the same old set-up. You work your fat bolognaise-eating butt through heaps of levels dotted across eight themed worlds. As usual there's heaps of entertaining Goomba-walloping and Boo-dodging action to be had. But SMB3 is slightly different in that you get to dress up in silly animal costumes when you power up.

That's all well and good, but some new levels and extra features wouldn't go amiss. And whaddya know, they exist... only we'll never see them!

The Japanese and US versions have got e-Reader support, enabling you to upload never-before-seen stages and extra features permanently to your cart. However, Nintendo Europe has just suddenly revealed that it has no plans on releasing the e-Reader in the UK, which had been scheduled for launch over here in October.

At the time of going to press, Nintendo could not confirm whether the extra e-Reader content would be crammed into the final UK boxed copy. If it is, add on an extra point to the score. However, CVG is almost certain that there won't be time for any alterations considering it goes on sale in a month.

If you're a hardcore Mario fanatic and just can't get enough of that classic precision-jumping tomfoolery, this will keep your addiction under control. But there just isn't any new content in this 'new' release, meaning that gamers looking for a fresh platforming experience won't be satisfied. CVG

Whoa! Whoa! Wh-wh-whoa! Whoa, here comes the hammer!

computer and video games VERDICT

SMB3 is fun, but if you've played Super Mario World it feels like a big step backwards. And we've been stuffed big-time on the extra content for the UK game. **Mike**

- ■ Classic Mario platform action
- ■ Funky power-up outfits
- ■ Kicking soundtrack

- ■ No extra e-Reader levels
- ■ Mediocre graphics
- ■ Little replay value

6 OUT OF TEN

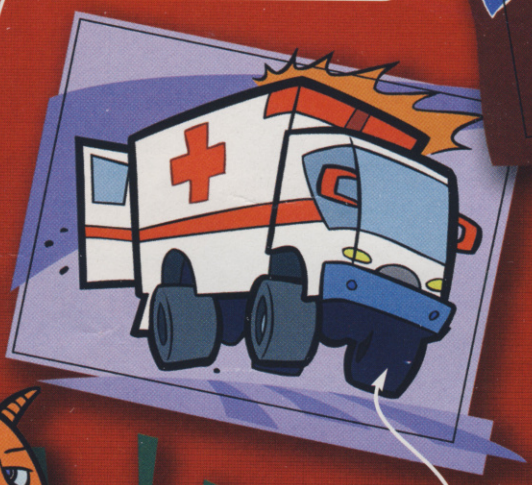
IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2 (GBA)

LOG ON AND LOAD UP ON INFO!

Still hungry for more even after thumbing through this game-packed issue of CVG? Logging onto **ComputerAndVideogames.com** will satisfy the biggest gaming appetites

HOTTEST GAMING NEWS

ComputerAndVideogames.com is Europe's leading online news service, covering games on a global scale. Any self-respecting games fan simply cannot afford to miss the latest developments on PS2, Xbox, Game Boy Advance, GameCube and PC from around the world. There's only one place to keep up and that's here. CVG's news is an essential part of your daily routine.



IT'S GOOD TO TALK

There's no better place on the Web to meet like-minded people than on our forums. Feel the need to spout on about your passion? We have bulletin boards for PS2, Xbox, GameCube, Game Boy Advance, PC, Mac, PSone, Dreamcast, N64, music and film, cheats, our online ranking service CSports.net and a general place to talk games. Join the party right now!

FIND THE GAME YOU WANT

Our site is fit to burst with an enormous amount of archived news, reviews, previews, features, cheats and downloads. Looking for some screenshots? We have thousands of them. And using our simple navigation, finding exactly what you want on any format couldn't be simpler: allow us to take the pain of searching out your gaming addiction!

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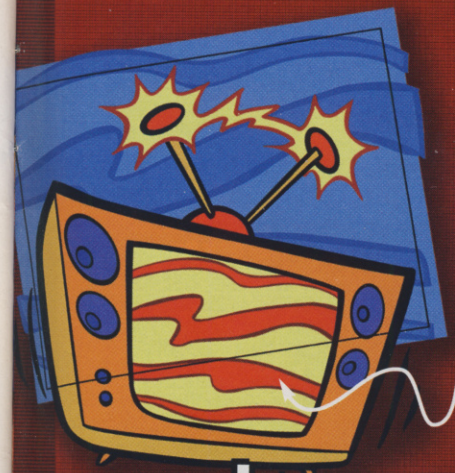
CheatStation is one of the biggest sources of gaming tips, cheats and guides on the Internet, supplying 37,558 cheats for 8877 games on 40 formats. Features such as being able to vote on any cheat make ComputerAndVideogames.com's service the best in the world. There's absolutely no need to go anywhere else.



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Fact: the best online competition prizes around are to be found on ComputerAndVideogames.com. Consoles, games, TVs and everything else you could ever need to make your gaming life a luxury fly out of our hands faster than you can say, "I need free stuff". Don't be a mug: you've got to be in it to win it.

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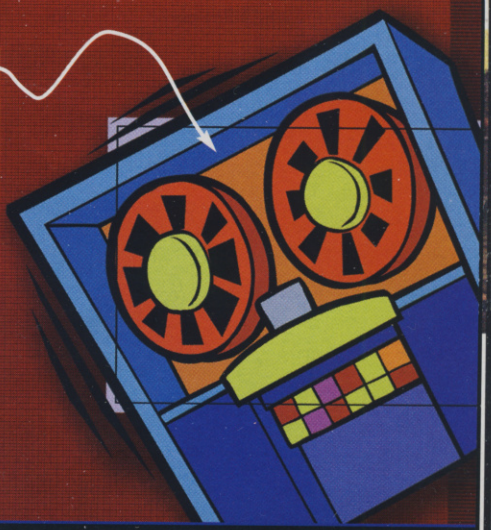


www.computerandvideogames.com

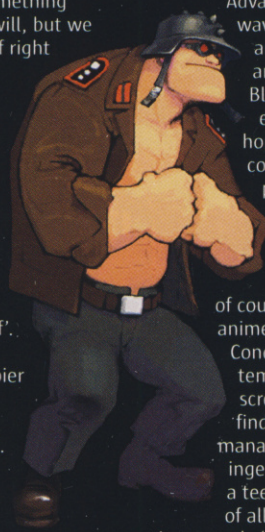
ADVANCE WARS 2™
BLACK HOLE RISING

THERE SHOULD BE LAWS AGAINST GAMES THIS ADDICTIVE

GAME INFO ● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: OCTOBER 3 ● PUB: NINTENDO ● DEV: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS ● WWW.ADVANCEWARS.COM

We're very sorry, but you might have to get through the next couple of months without your regular dose of CVG gaming goodness.

We'll try and get something together, honestly we will, but we just don't have any staff right now. An insidious yet delicious affliction known to scientists as Advance Wars Plague-o-rama has spread through the office, causing mass defections from desks and dark mutterings about 'unit supplies' and 'pincer movements on the bluff'. Nothing and no one is safe. Even the photocopier starts twitching when lightly stroked with a copy of Advance Wars 2. There's no hope for us here, but you still have time to shut your eyes, sing 'la-la-la!' loudly and turn the page without being seduced by intoxicating words of love about this evil Jezebel of a game.

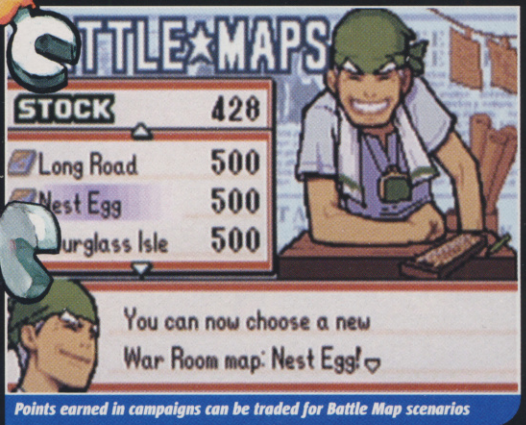


HOLE LOTTA LOVE

Still here? Thought so. Okay. Those who fondly remember the first Advance Wars game should wave their claw-like fingers and over-sized thumbs around like crazy, because Black Hole Rising is everything you could have hoped for. The pocket-sized combat sim basics remain pristine and untouched, but all sorts of cherries and gooey bits of icing have been dolloped on top. It's still turn-based, of course, still plays like a cute anime version of Command & Conquer and you'll still be tempted to take a screwdriver to your GBA to find out how they've managed to cram such an ingenious combat engine into a teeny-weeny cart. But most of all, you're going to be impressed all over again by the fearsome quality of the AI.

In some campaigns, the Fog of War prevents you from seeing where the enemy is hiding

War Room missions are single-battle scenarios where you can earn points and rankings. So get your finger out



Points earned in campaigns can be traded for Battle Map scenarios

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

The campaigns in Advance Wars 2 seem to cover every form of warfare strategy known to man. You might start off with a basic mission capturing enemy territory, but soon you'll be getting to grips with building your own units and engaging the enemy at sea and in the air as well as on the land. It's as complicated as you want to make it...

Each mission usually begins with some catty comments from the Black Hole team just to get you riled up. You talkin' to me?

Orange Star CO Nell will then offer some useful advice to help you plan your campaign. She's a friend of Tony Blair's

Some missions are time-sensitive so you'll have to move quickly to avoid a crushing and humiliating defeat

Now you can start moving your units into position and attacking. The better your plans, the greater your chances of victory

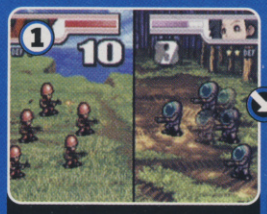
Need a rest from all the fighting? Try changing the colours of your favourite CO. It's wacky!

When you capture a building you get to jump up and down like a big baby. You big baby

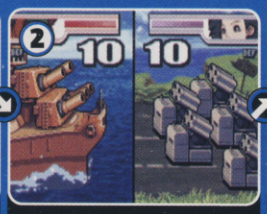
HEAVY METAL

Aside from the compelling gameplay, it's the ingenious and highly detailed weapon design that makes Advance Wars so appealing.

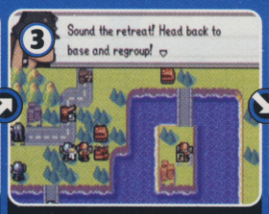
The more money you earn, the more you can plough back into buying cannon fodder foot soldiers. Or, better than that, huge shiny throbbing hunks of metal to wipe the smiles off the Black Hole COs smug faces. They're asking for it you know.



The grunts of Advance Wars. Life comes cheap at $1000 a pop.



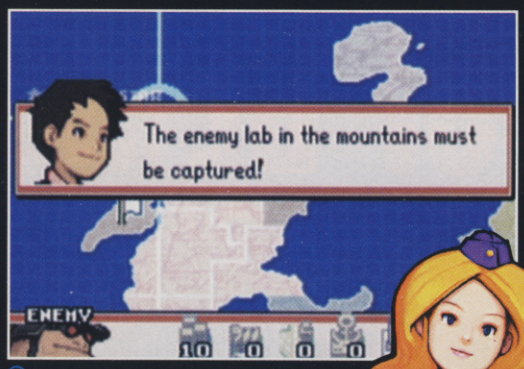
The battleship has the longest fire range of all the units. We like.



APCs are essential for transporting troops and delivering supplies

The humble tank is tough, cheap and fast across the ground

Unleashing a Super CO Power can have spectacular results



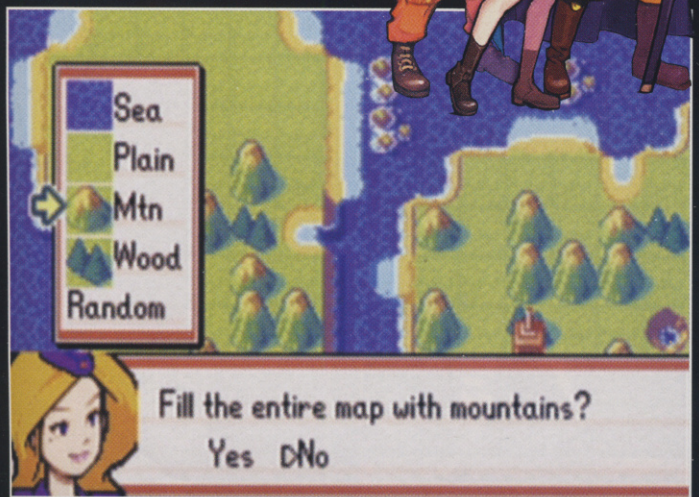
You'll usually have several missions to choose from at any one time on the campaign map

Multiplayer Link modes include Map Trading as well as two-versus-two battles

Whatever she did with that spanner we sure wish we HAD seen it...

Each CO has unique strengths and weaknesses. Olaf has a nice beard to catch crumbs in

This is what happens if you fill the map with mountains. Lots of cones, close together



Use Map Creator mode to construct your own battle scenarios. Fill it with mountains! Go on!

As the missions progress, your brain will be doing cartwheels inside your head trying to calculate how to out-fox the enemy. In later missions, not only will you need to be continuously thinking several moves ahead to avoid getting skewered by enemy units, you'll also need to be a micro-manager, harnessing your resources and building units before you get overwhelmed.

POCKET ROCKET

Heinous Black Hole overlord Sturm may have returned to reprise his pantomime villain role, but he's enlisted a whole new gang of hilariously evil henchmen and women who keep the action fizzing with their taunts and banter. Orange Star COs Andy, Sami and Olaf return to the fray, and you now get to play as several charismatic new COs in the expanded alliance ranks. Whereas the core gameplay remains essentially the same, CO Powers have been enhanced with the addition of an extra tier of Super Powers and a new star system to indicate CO Power levels.

Black Hole Rising has to be the definitive version for newcomers to Advance Wars madness. Fans might have hoped for a few more units other than the Neo Tank, but that's surely a minor quibble compared to the months of joy that await. CVG

GAMES VERDICT

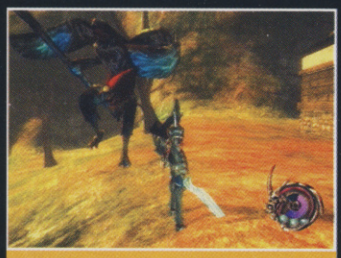
Turn-based combat sims might not be everyone's cup of napalm, but Advance Wars 2 expands on a formula already so addictive it should be locked away forever. Run for the hills. **Maura**

- Astonishing AI crammed into a tiny cart
- Crisp, lush anime-style graphics
- Witty repartee between the COs
- May ruin relationships with family and friends
- A couple of new modes would have been nice
- Just one new unit seems a bit stingy

9 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Final Fantasy Tactics (GBA) Worms Blast (GBA)

OTOGI: MYTH OF DEMONS



Fighting the bird man would be a whole lot easier without the distracting scenery

Otogi's atmosphere oozes more than a handkerchief in hay fever season

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING ● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: NOW ● PUB: SEGA ● DEV: FROM SOFTWARE ● URL: WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM/OTOGI

SAMURAI, SWORDS AND SORCERY MEET IN THIS SUMPTUOUS XBOX SLASH 'EM UP

Sometimes it seems videogame developers have only one trick left guaranteed to get our jaws splintering into a million chinny pieces as they hit the ground. And that's the improbably expanding and physics-defying bosoms of digital leading ladies everywhere.

But then along comes something like Otogi to dazzle our jaded eyes and work its tiny, pixelly magic the old-fashioned way.

Otogi sees Raikoh, long-dead samurai warrior and all-round moody sword-swinger summoned forth from the afterlife to cleanse the landscape of its demonic pestilence. In a blaze of pyrotechnic gymnastics, Raikoh must slash, hack and magically banish the marauding hellspawn back to the netherworld.

MYTHING IN ACTION

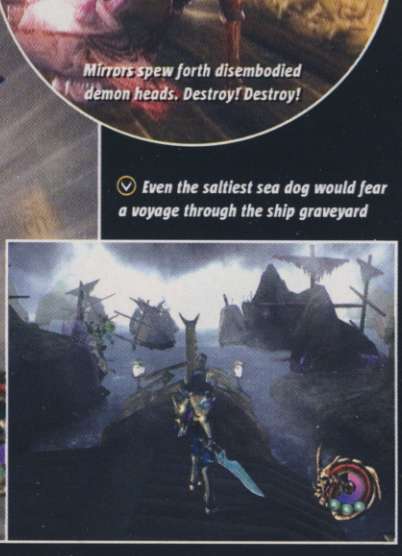
Drawing from classical Japanese folklore, each level is beautifully realised and refreshingly varied

You can research the strengths and weaknesses of enemies before battle

Mirrors spew forth disembodied demon heads. Destroy! Destroy!

Who cares if you're about to die? It all looks so pretty!

Even the saltiest sea dog would fear a voyage through the ship graveyard



The graphics engine can manage tons of monsters on top of the gorgeous scenery

The attention to detail in replicating historical settings is staggering

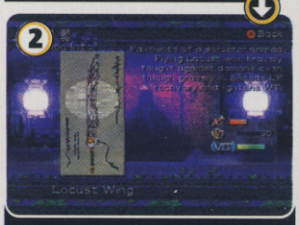
Obstructing the base prevents this mighty erection from spewing froth

BUY NOW, SLAY LATER

As you slice and skewer your way across the evil-ravaged lands of Otogi, you'll amass gold coins to spend on weapon upgrades and blistering new spells.

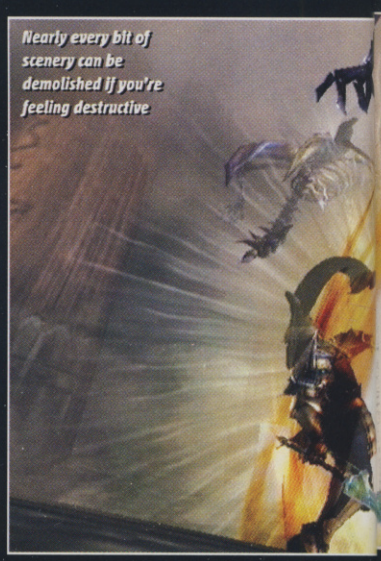
You can even repair your battle-blunted blades to get that just-stepped-out-of-the-salon sheen to your steel.

At the end of each level, your streak of destruction is awarded gold coins



The shop catalogue sports a wide selection of pointy objects

Race back into battle to break in that nice new blade you've just bought



Nearly every bit of scenery can be demolished if you're feeling destructive

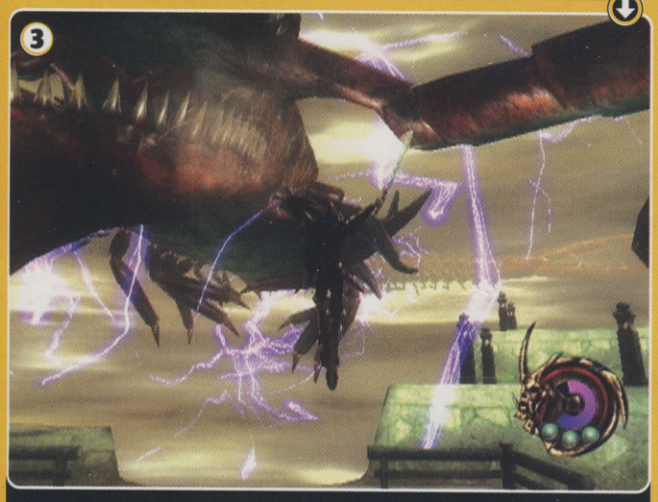
WHO'S THE DADDY?

At the end of each level you'll usually be thrown into an apocalyptic showdown with an über-demon. And they're not very nice, put it like that.

Not only do they make Otogi's other hellish brethren look like Barbie dolls, but it'll take a good deal of noggin-juice to suss out their weaknesses. Either that or pure, unrelenting fury. You don't just have to be brainy to win at this game you know.

If this unholy stinking-of-fish sea squid sinks your ship, you're done for

When the moon is obscured by clouds this boss is untouchable. Whoa, sinister!



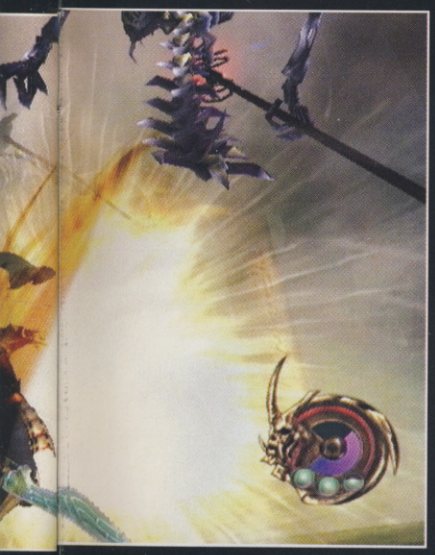
The legs on that... Kicking giant centipede butt will tax even the most ferocious warrior

- one minute you'll be hacking at giant molluscs to prevent your ghost ship from sinking as it sails soundlessly across a galleon-festooned graveyard, the next you'll be sloshing around in waist-deep waters shattering towering pillars to topple a massive temple.

The elegant control system enables Raikoh to execute brutal beatings, gravity-defying dashes and magic spells with a simple tap of a button, or string attacks together for wincingly powerful offensive combos. What's more, the fully adjustable camera ensures you won't be completely oblivious to a backside invasion from the demonic hordes when things get frantic.

As superb as Otogi's gameplay mechanics are, they pale in comparison to the sheer eye-licking beauty of the game's visuals. With lushly detailed worlds and textures so crisp they could slice your eyeballs clean in two, Otogi is like tiny mittens for your retinas. Throw in the relentless droves of absolutely massive – and bizarre – enemies and you've got some of the most fearsome and frenetic, if strangely serene, action on the Xbox yet.

While it's possible to romp through the title by abusing the speed-dash button to scoot around enemies and obstacles, drastically reducing longevity, you'd be doing yourself and the game a huge disservice. Every thrilling moment you spend with Otogi will have you purring like a cat that's swallowed an electric razor. Buy it, savour it and revel in its fraught yet satisfying gameplay experience. CVG



games VERDICT

Uniquely stylish, perfectly realised, slash 'em up action. The gorgeous visuals and haunting musical score is just the icing on its big fat 10,000-calorie gameplay cake. **Matt W**

- Massively varied and engaging level design
- Silky smooth control system
- Tear-wellingly beautiful graphics and sound
- The see-everything temptation to romp through the quest could ruin longevity
- Makes everything else look drab in comparison

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Devil May Cry (PS2) Shinobi (PS2)

Tom Clancy's GHOST RECON ISLAND THUNDER

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 1-16 OUT: NOW | PUB: UBI SOFT DEV: RED STORM WWW.GHOSTRECON.COM

RUSHING INTO BATTLE IS BAD FOR YOUR STEALTH

Tramps are getting really aggressive these days but you know, what can you do?

Your team-mates will pick off bad guys before you even spot them

The life of a soldier can't all be capering about in bushes and smearing your face with mud. Imagine how rubbish it must be knowing that every step you take might be your last.

Like its predecessor, Island Thunder brings this dubious pleasure to your living room. It's a standalone collection of 15 new missions, so you won't have to have the original to play it. With the first democratic elections about to take place in Cuba, the Ghosts are in charge of making sure everything goes smoothly – and that means putting bullets in the heads of bad guys.

WHAT DO YOU RECON?

You're still in charge of up to six team-mates, flicking between them to carry out your tactical plans. There's a huge emphasis on planning and the natural hesitancy that goes along with it. Rush into a combat zone and you'll end up bloodier than an abattoir floor. Work out what you're going to do carefully – your life, and the life of your team-mates depends on it. Since it's game over if one of your team dies, it makes for a tense experience. The multiplayer is a different matter since you can hopefully rely on your mates to help you out, and it's even better when you can whisper tactical commands into your headset.

Island Thunder's unforgiving nature means you'll need to love it to get the best from it. If you can stand the bumhole-clenching tension and the harsh difficulty, it'll reward you like a well-maintained assault rifle. CVG

You'd think terrorists would do something productive with a nice farm, but oh no

You'll get less messy if you shoot from here

Terrorists love their guns. Look, he's giving it a kiss! Question is, is that a Frenchie?

games VERDICT

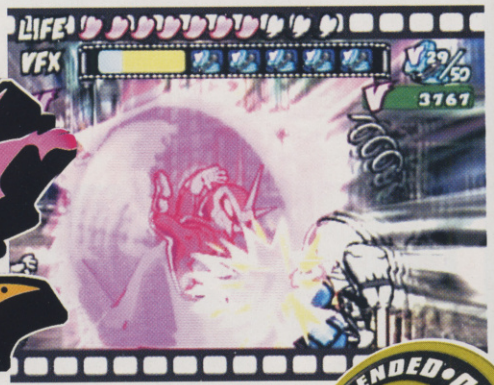
Requires more strategic planning than a night on the town when you're supposed to be grounded – but the payback is just as rewarding when it all works out. **Graeme**

- Rewarding tactical planning
- Intensely realistic
- Whispering on the headset is wicked
- Harsh and unforgiving
- Favours thought over action
- It's bloody hard

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Ghost Recon Conflict Desert Storm (PC, PS2, Xbox)

Viewtiful Joe



Take out multiple enemies with a spin kick, but do your stretches first

Bits of bad guys fly all over the place as you smack them up

You can bash enemies through each other and the scenery. Wallop!

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING

● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: OCTOBER 24
● PUB: CAPCOM ● DEV: TEAM VIEWTIFUL ● WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM

MORE STYLISH THAN NEO, MORE ATHLETIC THAN JACKIE CHAN – JOE'S OUR FAVE ACTION HERO

Viewtiful Joe looks so cool everyone stops to look at it. But the best thing about it is that as you pirouette across the screen like a ballet dancer, ducking fists and side-stepping bullets, anyone who's watching will think you're a genius.

That's what makes Viewtiful Joe so great – it's simple to play but consistently makes you feel like the coolest cat on Earth.

Makes sense, because this is the story of a guy who's just been sucked into his favourite movie. He gets to be a superhero with a flame red suit, a flowing cape and a truly awesome helmet. He's having one of the coolest experiences of his life, and so are you.

To say it's a 2D side-scrolling beat 'em up doesn't do it justice. Sure, the graphics are flat cartoon drawings, but they move and twist and flip all over the place. It's like being inside a 3D comic book with the bangs and flashes all up in your face.

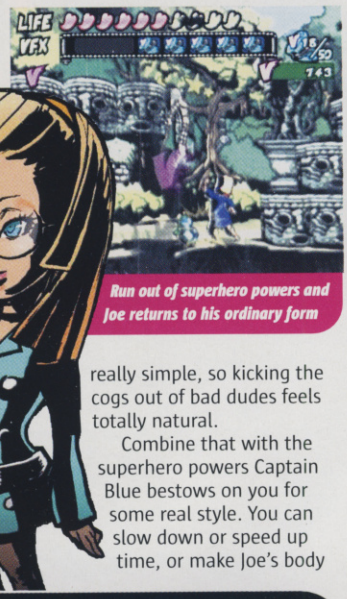
IT'S A VIEWTIFUL DAY

The fighting is more akin to the button-bashing school of thought, but it works better than ever. The controls are really simple, so kicking the cogs out of bad dudes feels totally natural.

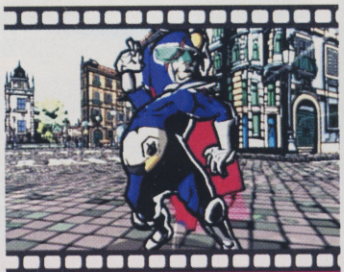
Combine that with the superhero powers Captain Blue bestows on you for some real style. You can slow down or speed up time, or make Joe's body become a flaming, spinning weapon. The powers are limited, but use them to chain together awesome attacks and they recharge.

There are puzzles too, but they're all solved with the minimum of fuss. There's never any dull key searching or backtracking, just superpowers and punches – which is the way we like it.

It's simple but challenging, and feels so cool you'll never get bored. Whether you're ducking bullets in slow-mo like a Technicolor Neo or flame-punching a bad guy through a chandelier, just remember to acknowledge your audience. CVG



Run out of superhero powers and Joe returns to his ordinary form

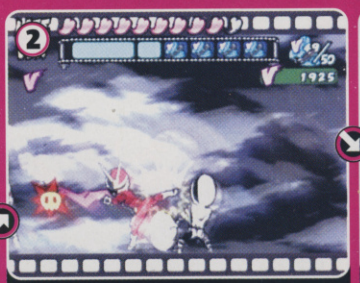


Captain Blue's let himself go a bit but can still teach you a thing or two. Or three

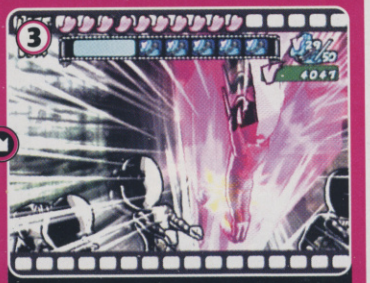
SUPER POWER-UPS

Captain Blue, Joe's pot-bellied superhero mentor, teaches him some sweet moves to help bust some bad guy heads. All in the most stylish way possible, of course...

Use slow motion to fling bullets back at gunslingers ×01



Speed up time and the clouds zip past as you batter everything. It's elemental, man



Zoom turns Joe into a burning kung-fu dervish. Now that's a handy function on your camera

GAMES VERDICT

With superhero gameplay that makes you feel like a Ninja and a visual style like a firework display in a dark room, Viewtiful Joe is more blazin' than Satan's bonfire. **Graeme**

- ■ Simple yet complex to play
- ■ Cool visual style
- ■ Makes you feel like a gaming guru
- ■ Later stages rock hard
- ■ Sometimes a bit too chaotic!

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Super Smash Bros. Melee (GC)

Buffy the Vampire Slayer™ CHAOS BLEEDS

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £39.99 | PLAYERS: 1-4 | OUT: OCTOBER 24 | PUB: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL | DEV: EUROCOM SOFTWARE | WWW.BUFFYGAME.COM

LAUGH IN THE FACE OF DANGER... WELL, DELIVER A FEW KILLER QUIPS. SCOOBY GANG OVERLOAD!

The Greatest TV Show Ever™ may have finished, but the spirit lives on in the multi-format sequel to the Xbox original.

Created by official Buffy novel and comic book writers Christopher Golden and Thomas E Sniegoski, Chaos Bleeds is designed to dovetail neatly into the story arc of Series 5. Which means Mom is dead, but Buffy isn't. Yet. Some familiar faces have returned to Sunnydale, and not all of them are pleasant. Some you thought were dead, some that smell dead, and some you only wish were. No spoilers.

SACRED DUTY... YADA YADA YADA

The first game was a useful introduction to the Buffyverse, but had significant flaws, including linear and one-dimensional gameplay plus an annoying save system. The wretched save system remains, but everything else is greatly improved. The action still revolves around punching, kicking and using all manner of exotic weaponry (Gorgon stakes, anyone?) to dust vampires, but the introduction of five more playable characters (including Sid the ever-randy wooden dummy) adds much needed variety – especially as each character has their own very particular fighting style. The puzzle elements have also been beefed up this time around, giving you a chance to flex your brain muscles as well as other parts. On PS2 the cutscenes still look somewhat grainy, but the in-game detail is impressive. It really feels like you're walking around the demonic hot spots of Sunnydale with all the attendant creepiness. The plot-driven structure, coupled with the eerily atmospheric soundtrack successfully conjures up the cool sensation of participating in one gigantic interactive episode of the show. Fans will love it, and everyone else should prepare to be converted.

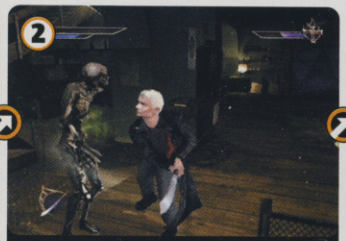
Vamps and other assorted icky creatures of darkness seem much more detailed this time

JUST BRING IT, LOSER!

While the first game focused on all-Buffy, all-the-time slayage, the gameplay in Chaos Bleeds has been expanded to reflect the genuine ensemble nature of the show – and is all the better for it.

Now you get to play through whole levels as one of five other Scooby gang regulars (Spike, Xander, Willow, Faith and one over-sexed ventriloquist's dummy), as well as the pert blonde butt-kicker herself.

You won't be 'Bored Now' once wiccan Willow gets her spell book out. Hell fiends beware!

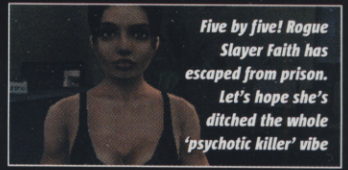


Undead Bufster love-puppy Spike's attack style is animalistic, feral and uncannily accurate

Xander has no special skills but he's good with weapons and fights like a docker

Multiplayer maps include Bunny Catcher. Just don't tell Bunny-phobic demon Anya

Dusting a vamp is easier now thanks to the tweaked control system



Five by five! Rogue Slayer Faith has escaped from prison. Let's hope she's ditched the whole 'psychotic killer' vibe

computer and video games VERDICT

At last Buffy fans can rejoice. A massive improvement on the first game, with virtually all aspects buffed up (cheers!). By the third game they should really have nailed it. **Maura**

- Cracking script, full of puns and in-jokes
- Superb voice acting from cast faves
- Quality cast interviews and out-takes

- No mid-level saves!
- Sarah Michelle Gellar and Alyson Hannigan not doing their own voice-overs. Boo!

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Alias (PC, PS2, Xbox) | Vampire: Bloodlines (PC)

Yu-Gi-Oh! THE DUELISTS OF THE ROSES

THE ART OF WAR

What makes Yu-Gi-Oh! so addictive? Purely and simply, it's all about thinking your way out of trouble when the odds are stacked against you.

Just like in chess, the new card system means that you have to think about your cards' positioning on the board as well as which monsters to summon.

In a Yu-Gi-Oh! duel, you can go from despair to jubilation in seconds

One minute you're gasping your last, at the mercy of a powerful card...

And the next, the perfect card miraculously pops into your hand

Now you can turn the tables and wipe the floor with your tormentor!

Watching monsters tear each other apart makes all our lives worthwhile

Even the monsters try to copy Yugi's spiky quiff

The more the map opens out, the harder the battles become. A bit like life when you think about it...

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING ● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-2 ● OUT: NOW ● PUB: KONAMI ● DEV: KONAMI JAPAN ● URL: WWW.KONAMI.COM

IT'S JUST LIKE SNAP, ONLY WITH MONSTERS AND THINKING

By now, Yu-Gi-Oh! fans will have realised that CVG is your friend. We love Yu-Gi-Oh! and we're just as excited as you are about spreading the word. Sometimes we even cry about it. It's a tear duct problem, nothing to worry about.

There are, of course, those who still shudder at the thought of playing a game based on some strange trading cards with a spiky haired cutie hero, a bandaged-up bloke called Simon and lots of monsters with names like (deep breath) Wicked Dragon with the Ersatz Head. There's no doubt about it, Yu-Gi-Oh! isn't for everyone. If, however, you feel like taking time out to pit your wits against a frighteningly intelligent computer opponent (or even your mates!) and learning a strangely addictive style of strategic gameplay, step this way, but mind Simon's bandages.

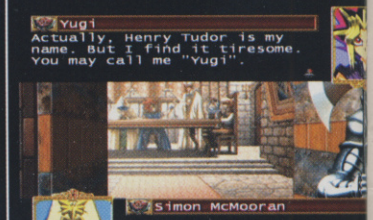
DOUBLE DRAGON

As ever, arch-enemies Yugi and Kaiba are butting heads and trading insults but this time within the historical context of the Wars of the Roses, way back in 1480s England. Imagine the intense rivalry between Leeds and Manchester United only with beards and ringlets. You can choose to align yourself either with Yugi or Seto Kaiba, and do battle with some very familiar faces and their trademark decks to win back the precious Rose cards.

Visually, it's pretty basic fare with few cherries on top, but the 3D monster battles are fun to watch, and the actual raw gameplay is as compelling as ever. Perfect for fans who want to polish up on their duelling skills, but we'd like to see the PS2's powers stretched a little more next time around. CVG

All your faves feature, including Weevil with his pesky insects, and posh Pegasus Crawford

Think we made it up? There really is a card called Wicked Dragon with the Ersatz Head



The cutscenes are like the cartoon series, but there aren't enough

It's not all about lizards and dragons. Sometimes mermaid wackiness ensues

Combine two cards to create behemoths like Giga-Tech Wolf

Terrain plays an important part. Don't get stuck behind an impassable Labyrinth

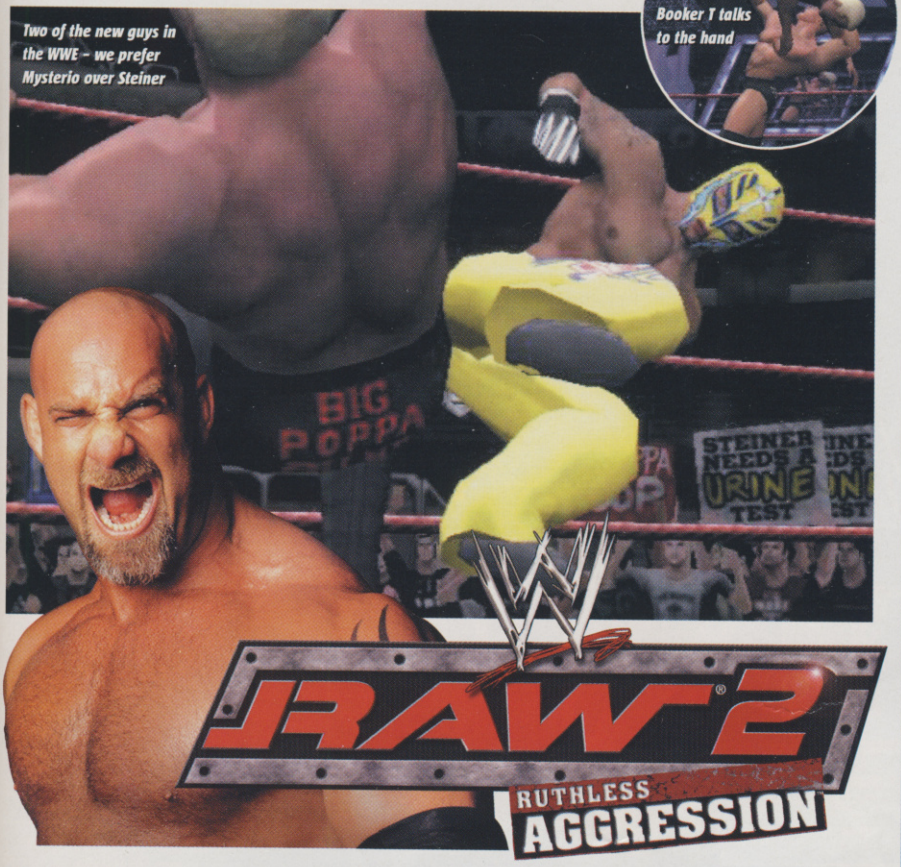
CVG VERDICT

Disappointing in terms of presentation, but near faultless when it comes to handling the complexities of card duelling. The extensive tutorial tries to ease you in gently. **Maura**

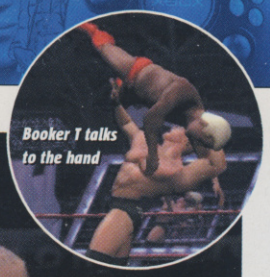
- ■ Amazing AI
- ■ New card movement battle system
- ■ Cards and monsters are beautifully depicted
- ■ Incredibly annoying music that sounds like a cat trapped inside a rusty barrel organ
- ■ Hardcore gameplay could alienate converts

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THIS... ■ Yu-Gi-Oh! Worldwide Edition (GBA)



Two of the new guys in the WWE – we prefer Mysterio over Steiner



Booker T talks to the hand

RAW 2 RUTHLESS AGGRESSION

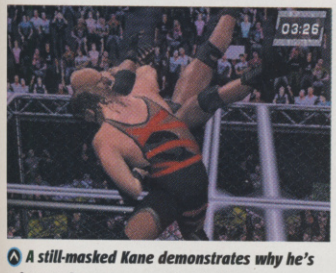
GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING

● COST: £X39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: OCTOBER 10
● PUB: THQ ● DEV: ANCHOR ● WWW.THQ.COM

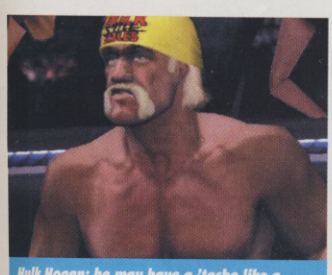
THE ORIGINAL WAS A DAMP SQUIB – THIS IS MORE LIKE IT!

Finally Raw feels like a game tailor-made for the Xbox rather than something thrown together in a hurry. Raw 2 makes up for last year's weak attempt at recreating the WWE by offering more characters, more matches and possibly the most impressive Create-A-Wrestler mode we've ever seen.

Luckily, the in-ring wrestling side has been beefed up as well. Although the action still feels a little slow, it is considerably faster than last year's game. Add new match types including Hardcore, Street Fight, TLC and Hell In A Cell, and you can see how Raw 2 is looking like a worthwhile sequel.



A still-masked Kane demonstrates why he's a force to be reckoned with. Don't mess



Hulk Hogan: he may have a 'tache like a crazy walrus, but he's got big chest muscles

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

The best news is that Raw 2 really utilises the Xbox hard drive in a way that other consoles can only dream about. The Season mode reacts to your decisions, storing your interaction with other wrestlers so they influence future matches, alignments and feuds.

Up to four players can compete in Season mode simultaneously and with over 55 superstars to choose from, including your own creations, the title belts are sure to change hands often. Speaking of the Create modes, although the physical creation of new wrestlers is still a little limited, you can really go to town on ring entrances. With full control over pyrotechnics, lighting and – best of all – the ability to rip CDs onto the Xbox, you can finally walk down the ramp to some decent music.

It might not have the class of SmackDown! but Raw 2 is moving the series in the right direction.

computer and video games VERDICT

A vast improvement over the original, Raw 2 offers plenty of variety with more characters, match types and plenty of customisable options. If only it were a little faster! **Alex H**

- CD ripping for custom ring entrances
- Season mode, where the stories are up to you
- Kane still wears his mask
- Too much graphical clipping
- In-ring it still feels too slow

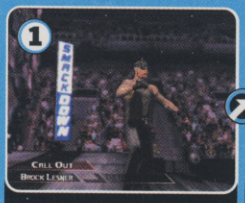
7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Soulcalibur II (Xbox) ■ WWE SmackDown! 4 (PS2)

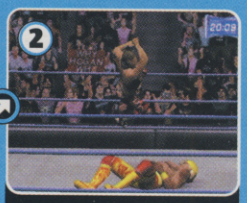
WHO NEEDS STORYLINES?

The Season mode in Raw 2 doesn't contain scripted feuds or any other pre-set stories. Instead events are determined by your actions, as you not only get to wrestle but interact with all the other scheduled matches.

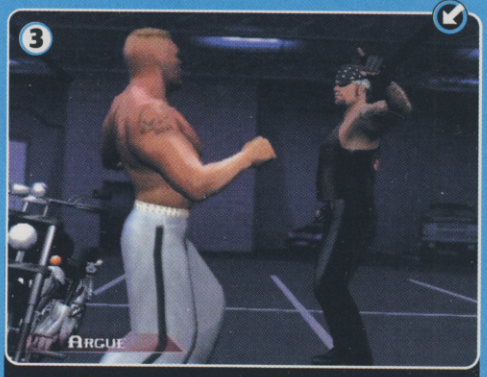
You can choose to interrupt other wrestlers, attack them on their way to the ring, set a trap for them backstage or steal items from their kit bag. As the Season unfolds, these actions determine who feuds with who and what the fans think of you.



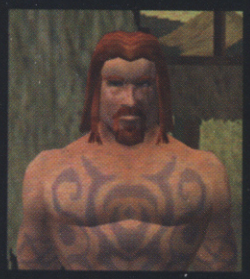
Undertaker starts to feud with Brock Lesnar by calling him to the ring



The feud heads to the parking lot where both wrestlers continue to argue



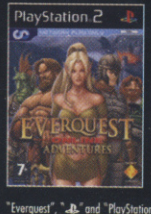
Someone's about to be set up for a surprise attack...



ALAN
Class: Warrior
Race: Barbarian

>Bashful Barbarian seeks fun loving Druid with insatiable thirst for blood*;-)

You can find A L A N@Coldwind Hall, Norrath.



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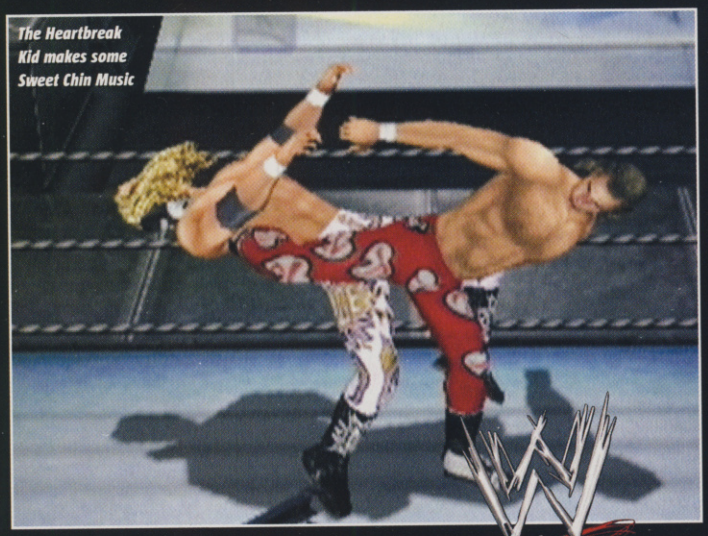
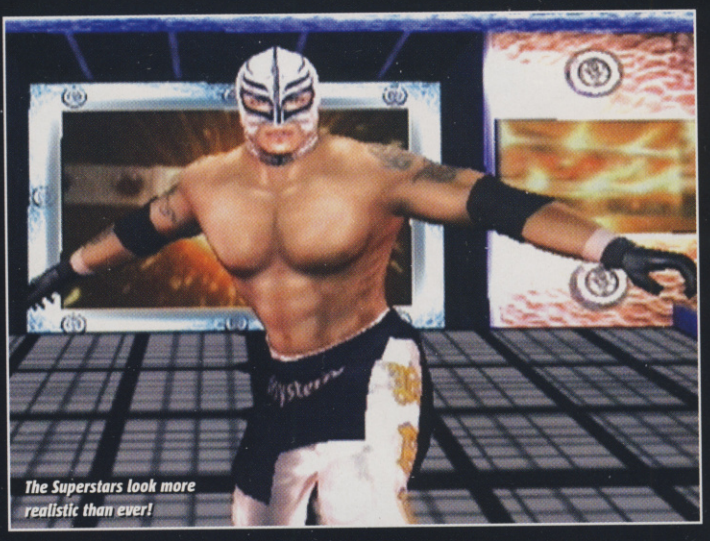
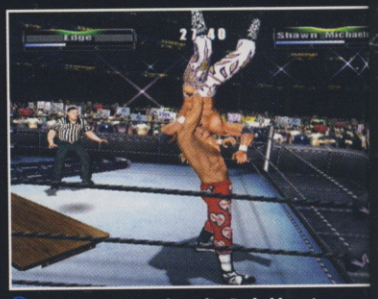

The Heartbreak Kid makes some Sweet Chin Music


The Superstars look more realistic than ever!

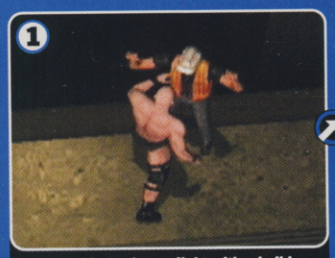
WWE WrestleMania XIX


Edge gets a taste of gravity. Probably not a taste he's going to want to acquire

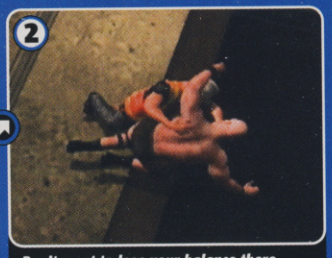
NOT SO SWEET REVENGE

There's no Season mode in WrestleMania XIX – instead we're 'treated' to Revenge mode. Here, Vince McMahon has booted your favourite WWE star out of the company. But don't worry, Stephanie is going to help you get reinstated.

Now watch in horror as, instead of facing a succession of jobbers, you have to walk the streets in nothing but your ring attire and fight security guards and construction workers! It's like the game's been invaded by the Village People. Did someone add this in when everyone was on lunch? And how come nobody noticed?



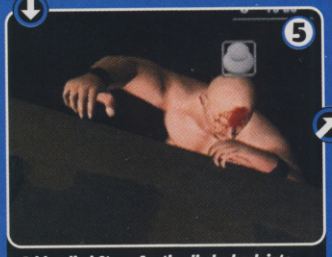
Stone Cold gets into a fight with a builder. See, he's even got a hard hat



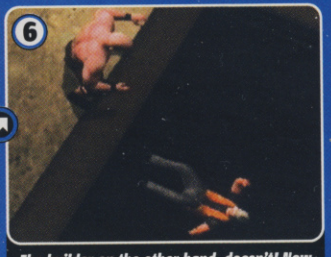
Don't want to lose your balance there, mate. Could Stone Cold be a goner?

The builder looks on in disbelief. But no! We have a fingertip situation!

Is this the end? It can't be! Stone Cold falls down into the darkness...



A bloodied Steve Austin climbs back into the ring, and lives to fight another day...



The builder on the other hand, doesn't! Now that's how you throw someone off a ledge

GAME INFO

COST: £34.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: SEPTEMBER 26
ONLINE GAMING
PUB: THQ ● DEV: YUKES ● WWW.THQ.COM

THE GAME YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR – BUT ONLY IF YOU'RE INTO WRESTLING BY NUMBERS

WrestleMania is the biggest event on the WWE's calendar. A show where legendary matches can make or break careers and where fans can expect the unexpected.

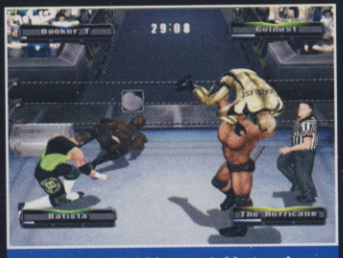
Pity the same can't be said about the console version. Don't get us wrong, this is still a competent wrestling game, but if you want the biggest around, you'll have to get a PS2 and the latest version of SmackDown!

This GameCube exclusive has the same development team as SmackDown! – the graphics even have an edge over the PS2 title, but once you get into the depth and control of the game it just pales in comparison.

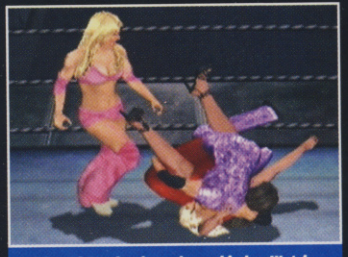
Goldust tastes blood and he likes it!

BETTER AND WORSE

Sure, there are plenty of new features thrown into the mix to make this worth your money if you're a fan of WrestleMania 18, but newcomers may be best advised to stay away. If you're back for more, what's changed? Well, the game engine for a start, with more emphasis on counter and reversal moves. It's a good idea, but poorly realised. Counters here only work if you have the timing of an Olympic official's watch. Location Specific Damage has been introduced and it makes submission matches much more fun to



Batista keeps fit with some Goldust push-ups while the ref does jogging on the spot


Trish and Stephanie go legs akimbo. Watch those heels love, they'll have your eye out

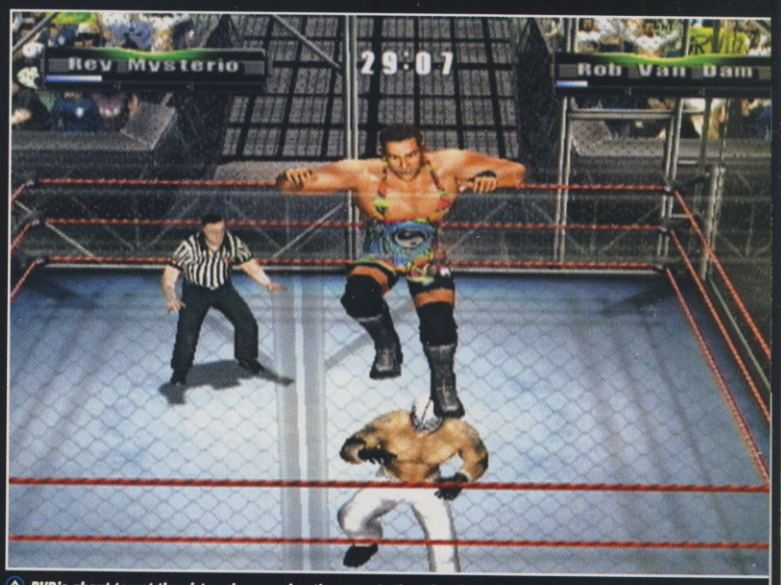
BUY THE T-SHIRT

It's not all doom and gloom. One idea in WMXIX is actually pretty good – so good that it's going to be in the next SmackDown! too.

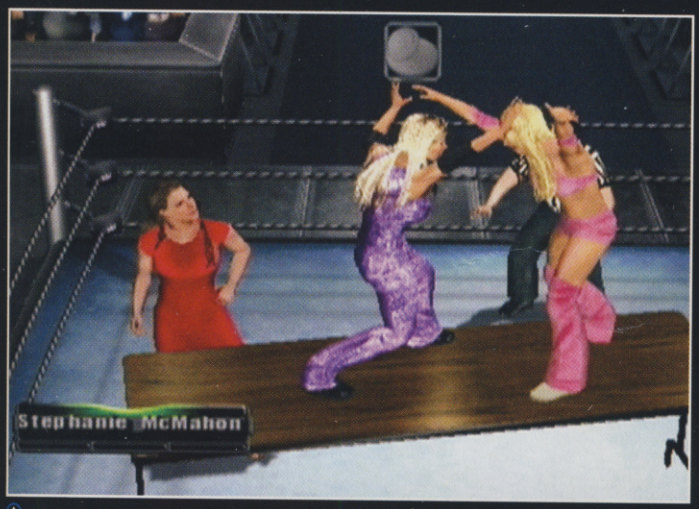
It's called ShopZone, a place where you can use hard-earned dollars to buy lots of unlockable items. They've got everything in here from new moves and attire for CAWs to new arenas, entrances and weapons. Yee-har!

Use your winning points to buy accessories like Heiachi hair. Check the crazy Side Wings

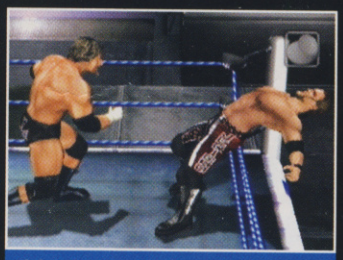
Stacy Keibler tries to sell us a guitar when we said we want the fire extinguisher...



RVD's about to get the victory by escaping the cage. Is that cheating? Seems a bit like running away

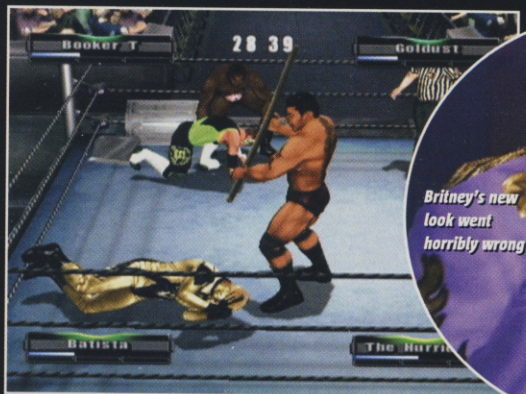


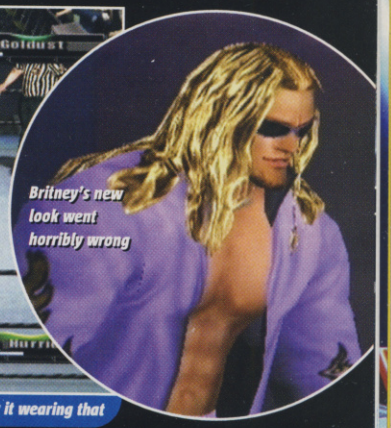
This is what happens when red, violet and pink clash in the ring. You need a table to break it up



Chris Jericho finds time to recline in his match. He could do with a bit of a sit-down

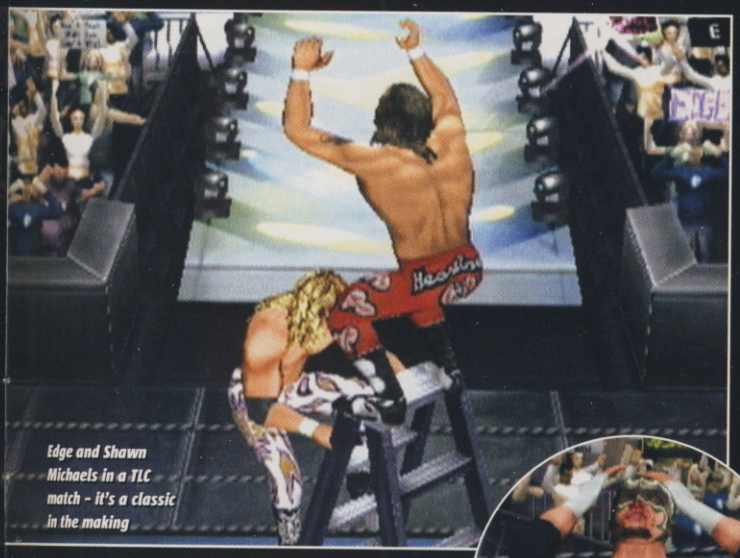
It's so silly the lengths you need to go to to get men to dance together



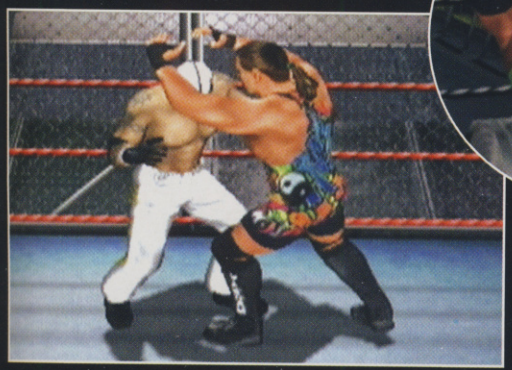


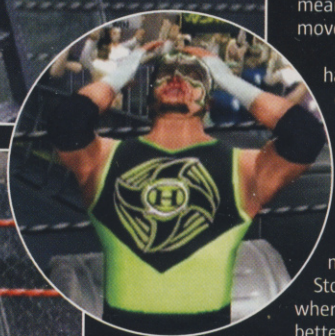
Britney's new look went horribly wrong

Who does he think he is, Conan? But Goldust is asking for it wearing that



Edge and Shawn Michaels in a TLC match – it's a classic in the making





Now Hurricane feels the scarlet flow. Anyone got a hanky?

Two of the WWE's most explosive stars inside a steel cage

play. However, due to clumsy and awkward controls you'll often find yourself going for a pin when you meant to execute another grapple move on your opponent.

Blood is another new feature that has been absent from the WWE games for too many years. Strike your opponent hard enough and you'll bust them wide open – well, give them a little nosebleed. We're happy to see blood back in the game, but can we have more than just nosebleeds please? Then there's the Story mode. No, not a Career mode where you go after WWE glory, or better still a Season mode where you battle different opponents, week in, week out. Nope, the Story mode in WMXIX is, to put it mildly, idiotic. It's called Revenge and it sees the Superstar of your choice kicked out of the WWE by owner Vince McMahon and forced to fight his way back into contention. Not by slumming it against low league opposition – no, that would be too sensible. Instead you have to beat up security guards and construction workers (see boxout).

Despite looking better and featuring more options, it's hard to say that WMXIX is better than last year's game. With a bit more thought this could have been a serious contender, but the mantra for churning SmackDown! titles out must be less thought, more haste. Shame.

CVG VERDICT

Looks better than WrestleMania 18, has more options and a more up-to-date roster. But once you settle in the improvements become glaringly absent. A step backwards for the series. **Alex H**

- Buying new items in the ShopZone
- Entrances are greatly improved
- The hairstyles in Create-A-Wrestler

- Revenge mode. OK it's a sub-game, but please!
- So much body and mat clipping it's untrue
- Counters – write in if you manage to do one

6 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... Final Fantasy Tactics (GBA) Worms Blast (GBA)

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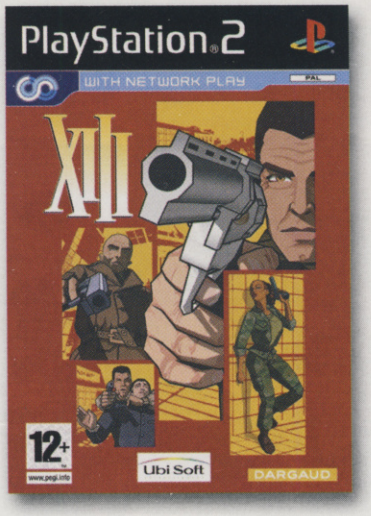

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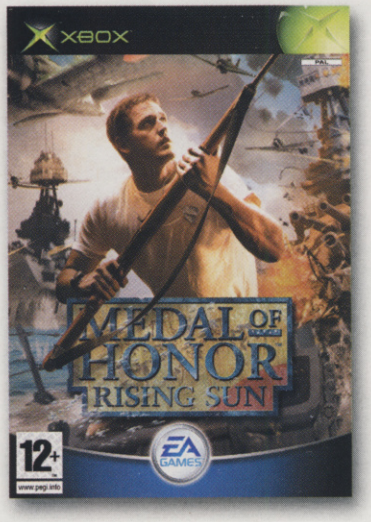

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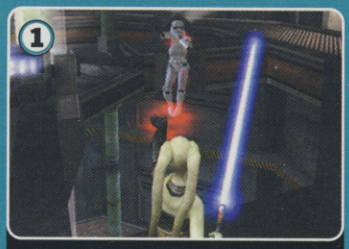
CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

Once you become a fully-fledged Jedi Knight, you get to choose a new lightsaber, with three distinct variations to decide between. There's the conventional single saber, dual sabers and the saber staff, each equally cool and with its own distinct fighting style.



With the single saber you can choke your foes and hack at their bits all at the same time!

The dual sabers offer the flashiest style, but it's harder to combine with Force powers

CVG's favourite, the saber staff has the most acrobatic style, with kicks and spins aplenty

STAR WARS® JEDI KNIGHT®: JEDI ACADEMY™

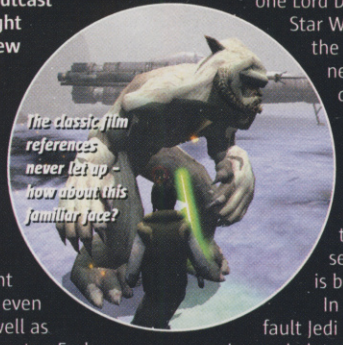
GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £39.99 | PLAYERS: 1-16 | OUT: SEPTEMBER 19 | PUB: ACTIVISION | DEV: RAVEN GAMES | WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/PRODUCTS/JEDIACADEMY | 86 CVG | XBOX

By the end of the game you'll be gutting dark Jedi like so many fish

BECOME THE MOST POWERFUL JEDI EVER IN THE NEW STAR WARS ADVENTURE

Jedis: the Ninjas of deep space. The ass-kicking crime-fighters are custom built for games, and the real crime is the lack of good Jedi titles over the years. Last year's Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast was a step in the right direction, but the new sequel finishes the work it started in stunning fashion.

As is only proper in any Jedi title, the key to this game is the lightsaber. Unlike the previous title, you're given one right from the start – you even get to design it, as well as your own player character. Early on your moves are limited, but as your powers grow you unlock a truly spectacular range of spinning, leaping and rolling saber attacks. These are complemented by the ace Force powers, 16 in total, as well as a bunch of conventional guns, rocket launchers and the like.



The classic film references never let up – how about this familiar face?

TOP OF THE CLASS

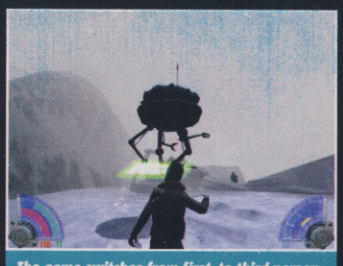
Once you're in the thick of the game, you can pick and choose which missions you want to do, taking in such familiar terrain as Tatooine, Hoth, an Imperial cruiser and the stately home of one Lord D Vader. The Star Wars-iness of the game is never in question, rewarding you with fan-pleasing cameos and references throughout, and the sense of atmosphere is brilliant.

In fact, there's little to fault Jedi Academy. The pacing and plot are excellent while the complexity of the combat builds gradually, keeping you hooked. By the time you're a Jedi Knight you'll be able to run along walls, see through buildings, brainwash your enemies with mind tricks and choke them like an insolent Moff. And you know that's gotta feel good. CVG

There's an Xbox version currently in the works

It's moments like this that make you wish you'd stayed on the farm with Uncle Owen...

Arm-wrestling the hungry Rancor was never going to be a good idea...



The game switches from first- to third-person view whenever your saber is drawn

computer and video games VERDICT

Every bit as good as KOTOR. The Force-wielding, saber-spinning action never lets up, and combined with some excellent levels and a solid plot, it's pure Jedi genius. **Anthony**

- ✚ Loads of acrobatic saber moves and 16 cool Force powers
- ✚ The atmosphere is classic Star Wars, with no hint of Gungans
- ➖ Combat is sometimes a bit random
- ➖ Some of the Force powers are underused

9 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ NOLF 2 (PC) ■ Max Payne (PC)

BREATH OF FIRE™ DRAGON QUARTER™

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING
● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: OCTOBER 10
● PUB: CAPCOM ● DEV: CAPCOM ● URL: WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM/BREATH_OF_FIRE_V

FLAGELLATE YOUR INNER ROLE-PLAYING MASOCHIST

Don't be calling us gaming wussies, but this latest Breath Of Fire adventure is like being forced to fight a whole motorbike gang with both arms tied behind your back. Blindfold.

Ryu's journey from sewer-sweeping grunt to über-powerful dragon demon, as beautiful as it looks, is one of the cruellest games we've played in ages. With save points as far as four hours apart, and original gameplay features that hinder rather than help your progress, this is clearly a game for grizzled role-playing veterans who feel at home wielding a level 53 Battle Mace.

OVERLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

RPGs are usually so lengthy that most people struggle to get through them just once. BoF is far shorter but encourages you to play over and over by using a new feature called 'Scenario Overlay System' or SOL.

When all of your team-mates die in battle, you get the option to 'SOL Restart' or 'SOL Restore'. If you restart you begin the game *from the very beginning* but with most of your gained experience, weapons and cash carried over. Choose to restore and you return to your last save (normally quite some time ago) with just your weapons and cash intact. It's pure evil at first because the game sets you up to be defeated. Your only reward for this bizarre system is that you see new cutscenes that elaborate major story points each time you play through. Regardless, we'd much prefer to be going forwards in a role-player than constantly thrown back to areas we've done to death.

Ultimately BoF is an overly-challenging adventure that seems to rely on a paucity of saves, and cruel and unforgiving gameplay gimmicks to extend its lifespan. Like Square Enix's recent Unlimited Saga, BoF attempts to push next-gen RPGs in a new direction but isn't all that successful. CVG

When alerted to your presence a '!' will appear, so distract 'em with a trap

The visuals get better the further into the game you get. Might take ages to do that, though

The bats are a pain to fight cos they each take a turn against you. Not fair!

D-DAY AGONY!

Arguably the most controversial new feature in Dragon Quarter is the D-Counter.

This gauge increases as you use Ryu's dragon abilities in battle. You can't reset it and when it's full it's Game Over and you have to SOL Restart (which is bad). Thankfully the original battle system, where you use traps and bait to tactically engage with enemies, helps make up for the D-Counter frustrations.

Use the Dragon Dash to escape battle but it'll fill your meter. Death comes soon after

Using points to move and attack in battle gives you a lot more freedom

Dragon power-enhanced attacks are powerful but fill up your D-Counter like everything else...

Giant genetically mutated chickens roam the sewers of the future

The FX when you unleash the big guns are eye-tickling

Stay away from the teeth-end of this wiggler

computer and video games VERDICT

Lots of new ideas here but only one – the great new battle system – really works at all. The constant restarts and harsh difficulty make this more frustrating than fun. **Lee**

- Story will entice you to play through the pain
- Nice cel-shading and an awesome soundtrack
- New gameplay ideas to flex your RPG muscles

- There simply aren't enough places to save
- It's rock hard at first and dead unfair
- It's actually a really short game

6 OUT OF TEN

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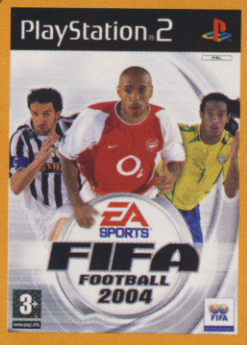

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

Release Date: 31 October 2003

FIFA Football 2004 returns as the true authority in football gaming. All new Off The Ball™ Control lets you control the man on the ball and the men off it. A new Career Mode gives you the chance to take a team from the lower divisions, battle through ranks, sign new players, and turn them into champions.

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Release Date: 24 October 2003

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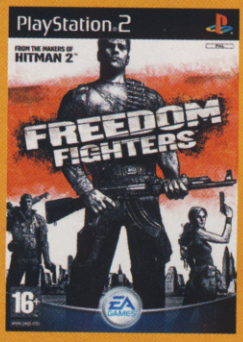

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Release Date: 26 September 2003

In a world where the Soviet Union won the Cold War, a fierce conflict is unfolding in the streets of America. Taking on the role of Christopher Stone, players evolve from an average New Yorker into a fearless patriot who recruits and leads an army of freedom fighters in the streets of New York City.

XBOX · PC · PlayStation.2

TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2004

Release Date: 21 November 2003

Specifically designed for the console, Total Club Manager 2004 offers total management control through an intuitive navigation system and dynamic user interface, while integrating the most comprehensive player and team database on the PS2.

XBOX · PC · PlayStation.2

SOULCALIBUR™ II

Release Date: 26 September 2003

SoulCalibur™ II is the third installment in the hugely successful "Soul" franchise. The game offers massive refinements in its arena design, offensive and defensive combat and battle tactics, alongside improved character graphics and intuitive controls.

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The Simpsons HIT & RUN

EXCLUSIVE CVG REVIEW

GAME INFO

● COST: £39.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: NOVEMBER 7
● PUB: VIVENDI ● DEV: RADICAL ● WWW.THESIMPSONS-HITANDRUN.COM

GTA SIMPSONS-STYLE, MINUS THE PIMPS AND HOOKERS. UNLESS YOU COUNT SELMA AND PATTY

Simpsons fans are hard to please. They're used to a rich diet of quality humour and some of the best verbal and visual gags to be found anywhere on the planet.

Hence the understandable crushing disappointment when most of the Simpsons games to date have failed to deliver the goods, ending up more like Montgomery Burns' feeble handshake than Bartholomew J's righteous fist of fury. Hit & Run goes a long way towards stopping the rot.

MELLOW YELLOW

Whereas games such as Road Rage were all about ferrying fares around Springfield for cash, Hit & Run revolves around the GTA concept of using a variety of vehicles to carry out missions such as Race the Nerd to the Java Server. In GTA: Vice City, the missions involve nefarious criminal deeds. In Hit & Run, the madcap antics are strictly legit, if extremely bizarre. This is Springfield, after all.

Across 50-plus missions you'll get the chance to drive Homer, Bart, Lisa, Apu and Marge in all sorts of crazy vehicles, ranging from Bart's soapbox racer to Lisa's Malibu Stacey sports car. As the missions unfold, so does a plot of sorts, involving strange black spy vans and giant mechanical monsters.

Not that the game is all about completing missions. There are several parallel plot developments to keep track of as well, including Bart and Lisa's frantic efforts to get their hands on Bonestorm 2, the hottest videogame in Springfield.

It's fun getting the chance to poke around in other people's gardens

Cause too much mayhem and you'll trigger the Hit & Run Cop Alert

The brilliant Multiplayer Madness is one of Hit & Run's strongest selling points

Keep an eye out for ramps. There's sure to be a spectacular stunt at the other end

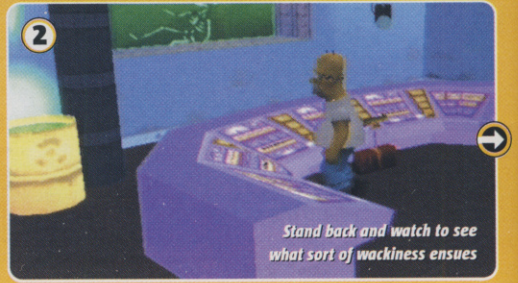
The vehicle handling seems very accurate. Some cars are easier to drive than others

GAGGING FOR IT

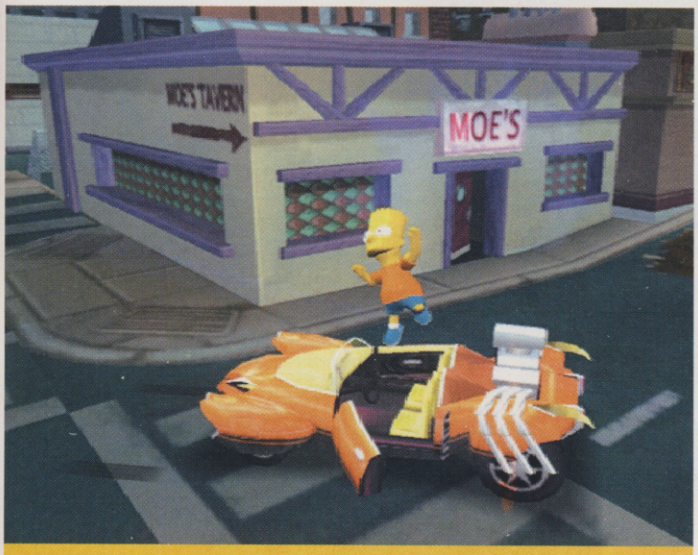
A Simpsons game without gags is like Barney Gumble without a Duff beer or Krusty without his painted smile. It just wouldn't happen.

As well as being packed with all the verbal witticisms and visual gags we'd expect, in Hit & Run the chuckle factor even makes its way into the side quests. Each level has a certain number of set-piece 'gags' to activate and collect. Sweet!

When you see a glowing object walk up to it and press Triangle



Stand back and watch to see what sort of wackiness ensues



"Violence is always a valid response." The wise words of Bartholomew J Simpson

In between missions you'll have the opportunity to explore the huge environments at your leisure. You may not be able to enter every house, but you're free to roam around, stumble on secrets and wander into familiar locations such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and Camp Krusty.

SPRINGFIELD CONFIDENTIAL

Obviously, Simpsons fans will be delighted with Hit & Run. The characters have been lovingly recreated and the script is easily as witty as the show. There's so much going on in the background that devotees will want to play each mission over and over again in case they miss anything.

However, the gameplay is still fairly simplistic and repetitive once you strip away the beguiling humour. The difficulty level appears to be pitched at younger gamers, possibly those who would like to play a GTA-style game but are barred by the age limit. Driving around with the likes of Apu and Principal Skinner in tow and sniggering at their ravings will have you in stitches, but Vice City certainly has nothing to fear in the gameplay stakes. Older gamers will want a lot more depth for their money. CVG

Who knew that Springfield had acres of such beautiful picturesque scenery?

FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS

It can't be true. The Simpsons meets GTA? How can it be? Is Springfield's favourite dysfunctional family really mixing it with the scuzz-balls on the mean city streets, and how did they ever manage to get such a concept past the censors and other assorted buzz-killers? Relax, it's all done in the best possible Simpsons-style taste. Loser.

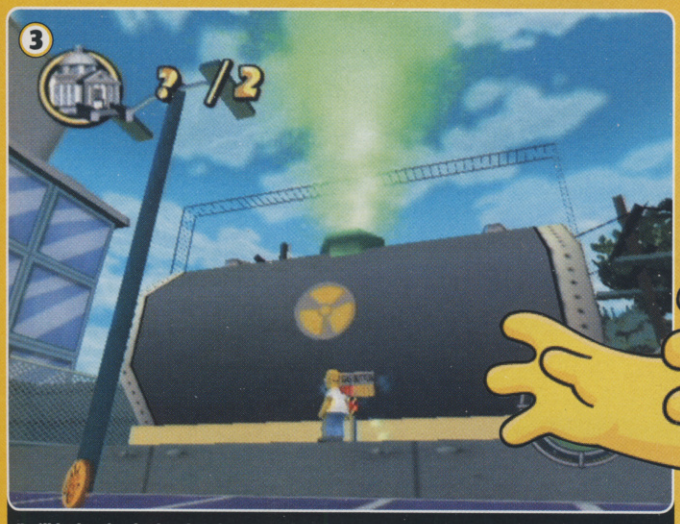
You can commandeer any vehicle, but you're hitching a lift rather than carjacking. Equally effective and no pesky cops. Hurrah!

Feel free to flatten pedestrians, but expect a few stern words as they furiously kick their little legs. Still refreshingly violent, though

You can walk right up to people and hit them, but unlike in GTA you won't see any blood

Collect the big shiny coins which litter the levels and save up to buy some new threads

Homer usually likes to sleep when he's at his Power Plant job. Not today, though...



You'll be hunting for laughs - be sure to look for gags in the most out-of-the-way places

You'll never grow tired of reading all the billboards

computer and video games VERDICT

The best Simpsons game to date. Nowhere near as shocking or compelling as Vice City, but mowing down hapless Springfield residents is worryingly enjoyable. **Maura**

- You'll be laughing out loud
- Huge levels make you feel like you've explored every inch of Springfield
- We want a Simpsons RPG
- Gameplay might be too simplistic for non-Simpsons fans

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ *Futurama (PS2, XB, GC)* ■ *True Crime (PS2, XB, GC)*

alter echo

SUITS YOU, SIR

Alter Echo gives players access to three different types of combat suit, each tailored to a particular style of fighting.

Using the suits' individual powers is essential to success and, once you've collected all three, you can easily swap between them at any time.

The normal battle suit allows Nevin to use a massive sword to hack his enemies into bite-size pieces

Although it moves slowly, the battle suit allows Nevin to fire a steady stream of bullets and powerful grenades

The cat-like stealth suit can be used to jump on enemies' heads, climb special ladders or become invisible

In certain places the battle suit can turn into a cannon to pepper the landscape with hundreds of bullets. You really can make it rain lead

Stopping time is the best way to defeat groups of enemies

Kill chains of enemies in a row and you'll increase your hero's powers

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | ● COST: £34.99 (PS2) £39.99 (Xbox) ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: NOW ● PUB: THQ ● DEV: OUTRAGE GAMES ● WWW.ALTERECHO.COM

PART SPACE ADVENTURE, PART BLASTER, PART DANCING GAME – IT'S A MAD ONE

Bringing together the lightning-paced bloodshed of Devil May Cry and the addictive rhythm action of Dancing Stage may sound like a tall order, but Alter Echo just about manages it.

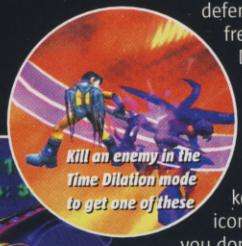
Set in the year 2850AD, Alter Echo finds mankind obsessed with a natural element called Plast that can be moulded by psychic 'shapers' into anything they desire, including weapons and spaceships. However, the world's most powerful shaper is holding the Earth's sole source of Plast to ransom, and now it's up to you to liberate the planet Proteus from his evil rule.

DANCE OF DEATH

Alter Echo is an action-adventure in the Devil May Cry mould where the cartoonish hero, Nevin, explores a colourful alien world. He has to defeat hordes of monsters and bosses on his way to the final showdown with Paavo, the universe's most skilled shaper.

Help comes in the form of planet Proteus itself, which builds special combat suits for Nevin that allow him to tackle enemies with a sword, shoot them with powerful blasters or sneak past security cameras using his stealth skills. These suits can also be upgraded as the game unfolds, giving Nevin access to new areas of Proteus and adding tremendous depth to the non-stop battle action.

Aside from using the suits to defend himself, Nevin can also freeze reality in Time Dilations, shifting the action to a simple rhythm action puzzle game. When this happens, players use the controller's directional keys to move a glowing icon through a maze. But, if you don't hit the buttons in time to the rhythm set by the computer, the action shifts back to the real world, forcing Nevin to tackle his enemies using more traditional methods.



Kill an enemy in the Time Dilation mode to get one of these

However, while the ability to switch between suits keeps the combat fresh and exciting, the limited range of alien tormentors means that the action tends to become repetitive after a while, and the dodgy camera and poorly placed save points also prevent Alter Echo from being an essential purchase. But if you want an action-adventure that pushes the envelope with complex attacks, stylish graphics and entertaining mini games, Alter Echo is certainly worth a punt.

The rhythm action-style mini games are great for breaking up the relentless fight sequences

Collect credits as you kill enemies and you can use them to buy suit upgrades

Like in Devil May Cry, you can use vertical sword swipes to juggle your hapless enemies in the air

The battle suit is great for wiping out waves of enemies with your superior firepower

computer and video games VERDICT

Although the relentless fighting becomes tedious after a while, Alter Echo is still a compelling action-adventure that rewards the effort to discover its secrets. **Dave**

+ Cool suits
+ Compelling action
+ Stylish looks

− Repetitive action
− Some crap monsters
− Won't be to everyone's taste

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Devil May Cry 2 (PS2) ■ Dancing Stage Euromix (PS2)

JUDGE DREDD

DREDD VS DEATH

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | COST: £39.99 | PLAYERS: 1-4 | OUT: NOW | PUB: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL | DEV: REBELLION | WWW.DREDDVSDEATH.COM

THE WORLD'S BEST FASCIST COPPER MAKES A SEAMLESS TRANSITION TO XBOX

Rebellion loves Judge Dredd. Like, really loves him. Consider its purchase of 2000AD. And we're not talking about nipping down to WHSmith's for the latest copy – we're talking about buying the magazine in a 'we liked it so much, we bought the company' way. Straight up. They're Mega-City mad.

That's commitment to a cherished cult character. That says, 'We're gonna bust our balls on this one.' And true to its word, amid the remains of Rebellion's mangled gonads lies a game that captures Judge Dredd's futuristic hell-hole with real aplomb.

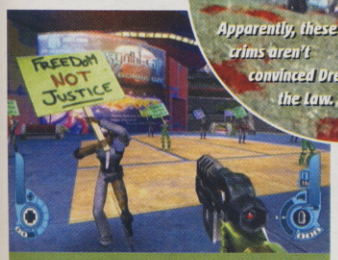
Everything about the look of Mega-City One and its oddball residents screams labour of love. From hearing Joe Public exclaim, 'Drokk!' to huge adverts for Umpty, the addictive candy – it's all here to prove to fans they know Judge Dredd as well as any.

FIRM BUT UTTERLY UNFAIR

The payback for all this slavish devotion is a game that's essentially a showcase for Dredd's heavy-handed, neo-Fascist, bully boy inclinations – which you'll either love or hate. It's about as character-driven as you can get with an FPS, and about as PC as referring to Anne Widdecombe as a fatty midget freakazoid.

Sometimes it's you on your own, other times there's back-up

Apparently, these crims aren't convinced Dredd's the Law. Silly



Mega-City One has its fair share of dreamers. Hmm, not sure if that's an arrestable offence

The vamps have stupidly sharp claws and stinking breath. Yuk! Gerrrofff!

A MONEY-SPINNER

The days of just releasing a game are over. You've got to get pan-media all over a game's ass. You need a novelisation and you need a standalone, one-off graphic novel too.

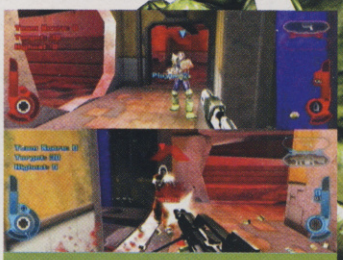
And that's just what we're getting with Judge Dredd: Dredd Vs Death, plus an exclusive strip running on GAME's website. Check it out on http://shop.game.net.

The graphic novel contains Dredd and Death-dominated stories plus a history of the Dark Judges. Then there's the novel, written by Gordon Rennie, that acts as an accompaniment to the game. Christ on a bike that's a plan...

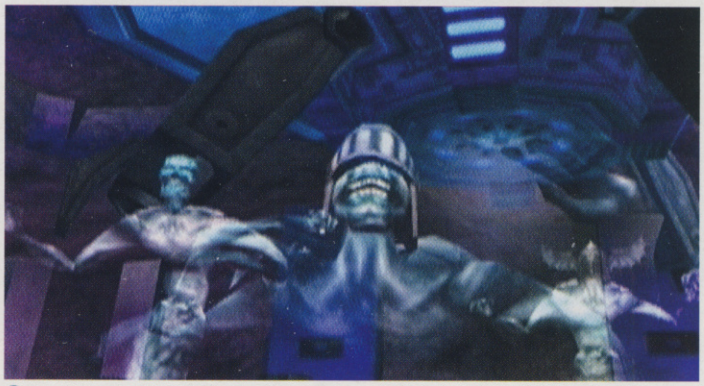
The Game comic strip is just a small part of Operation Dredd Everywhere

Gordon Rennie, the author, is a veteran Dredd collaborator. Just so you know

Some of the perps are cowardly so fire a burst to make them surrender



Expect a smoother frame-rate with the Xbox multiplayer. But then that's not hard



The Dark Judges have been set free from their Iso-Cubes. And they're not happy

Throughout the story of vampires running amok and Dark Judges going schiz, the blood spews forth at the slightest provocation and seriously harsh sentences are handed out that make a stretch at Camp X-Ray seem like a Butlins holiday. It's you as the meanest hombre that ever walked the 22nd century, hunting your arch-nemesis, Judge Death, and it's authentic as hell.

Having said that, it's no genre-busting messiah in the mould of Metroid Prime or Halo. But it is an accessible shooter that serves up an abundant hot buffet of vampires, Dark Judges and perps – kind of like the way recent James Bond games keep it simple and user-friendly without ever delivering many real 'wow' moments.

There's good, solid gun action to be had, but the thrill behind this game lies in whether you think Judge Dredd is the best comic book character of all time. If you do, then then this is for you because the vibe's spot on. Understand this and you'll be able to overlook the ridiculous deaththrows, erratic AI and the occasional stutter – especially if you've got the spare thumbs to make the most of the great co-op and multiplayer modes.

computer and video games VERDICT

A decent shooter slightly dogged by iffy AI and frame-rate issues, but with great visuals and multiplayer options. Judge Dredd is what makes the game rock – fans will love it. **Rich**

- Looks like the comic strip brought to life
- Loads of different gameplay options
- You get to say 'I am the Law' lots

- Enemies can be really stupid
- Levels can sometimes appear devoid of life
- The gameplay's a bit lame

7 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ James Bond: Nightfire (Xbox) ■ Wolfenstein (Xbox)

GAME INFO
ONLINE GAMING
● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: OCTOBER 10
● PUB: CAPCOM ● DEV: CAPCOM ● URL: WWW.CAPCOM.COM

DISNEY'S ALADDIN

The bosses look great and are bloody hard to beat

The rock-hard flying carpet escape is pretty unforgiving

Back in the old days, Capcom's 16-bit adventures based on Disney movies and characters were the slickest, most colourful games around – and now you can relive the joys of Aladdin on your GBA.

Based on the 1993 movie, Aladdin is a side-scrolling action-adventure where the eponymous hero fights soldiers, rides magic carpets and explores brand new bonus stages exclusive to the GBA. The game's as much fun as it always was, and the new levels add variety to a package that's already familiar. But that's as far as it goes – Disney's Aladdin offers nothing ground-breaking or unique. Shame.

- Colourful graphics
- Fast-paced platforming action
- Classic Disney characters

- Difficult flying carpet sequences
- Repetitive enemies
- If you hate Disney, you'll detest this

7 OUT OF TEN

GAME INFO
ONLINE GAMING
● COST: £24.99 ● PLAYERS: 1 ● OUT: SEPTEMBER 26
● PUB: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE ● DEV: SPELLBOUND ● URL: WWW.STARSKYANDHUTCH.COM

STARSKY & HUTCH

That red arrow tells you where the crim is... Faster!

The game looks great and takes you all over Bay City

Based on the classic Seventies cop series, Starsky & Hutch sees players burning around the mean streets of Bay City, defusing bombs, chasing criminals and looking cool in the iconic 1974 Ford Torino.

As well as a standard story mode that challenges boy racers with task-based missions, various mini games fill out the nostalgia trip. Chase The Ace and Downtown Dash get you to do yet more bombing about in your flash car, adding depth to the basic package. Fun and beautifully presented, Starsky & Hutch is only let down by its fiddly controls that can take hours to master.

- Wide variety of challenges
- Slick 3D graphics
- Loads of cars to drive

- Super-sensitive controls
- Unforgiving challenges
- Cheesy music

7 OUT OF TEN

GAME INFO
ONLINE GAMING
● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-4 ● OUT: NOW
● PUB: TDK MEDIACTIVE ● DEV: SYNETIC ● URL: WWW.TDK-MEDIACTIVE.COM

WORLD RACING

Looks nice, but World Racing is dull as ditch water

Leave the tracks! See the world! Get bored in seconds!

Racing games need to be special to make an impact these days – World Racing doesn't have what it takes.

Although the option to leave the track and explore the lush locations is a welcome innovation, the fact you can't interact with the landscapes or mow down cows means that it's not worth the trouble. The AI of the rival racers is also much too tough, and the promised 100-plus cars are simply variations on a narrow range of Mercedes-Benz motors. Flawed and frustrating, World Racing is only recommended for hardcore Mercedes-Benz nuts.

- Off-road racing
- Huge environments
- Um...

- Poor selection of cars
- Dead landscapes
- Limited number of tracks

5 OUT OF TEN

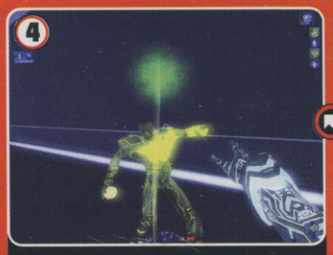
SPRITES AND BYTES

The friends and enemies that you meet in Tron 2.0 represent computer parts in human form. Imagine putting a face (and body) to your hard drive...

System-corrupting viruses are portrayed as poisonous green fanatics who hurl bombs and mutter sinister incantations about 'cleansing the unbelievers'. Helpful programmes such as Mercury are portrayed as softly spoken beatific creatures while your little buddy Byte is a chip with a neat line in techno-quips.

Mercury is voiced by Rebecca Romijn-Stamos who plays Mystique in the X-Men movies. So she sounds as good as she looks

Pompous digital sidekick Byte is a distant relative of the Bit sprite in the original movie. He can be a bit chippy!



The evil z-Lots are fanatical followers of the mysterious leader, Thorne. Fluorescent people are often bad, remember that

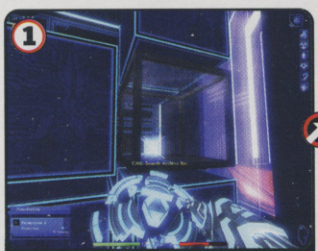
Jet's digitised self is a lot more buff than his human form. We reckon he's just padding himself out with digitised socks

Talk to friendly programs and they might help you out. But don't rely on them for fashion tips!

SOFTWARE

The Subroutines system is a way of upgrading and tinkering with your character's different attributes, abilities and weapons.

You only have a certain amount of memory space available for installing Subroutines so you will find yourself constantly tinkering with your preferred Subroutine set-up as circumstances fluctuate. It's a fiddly business, but very absorbing.



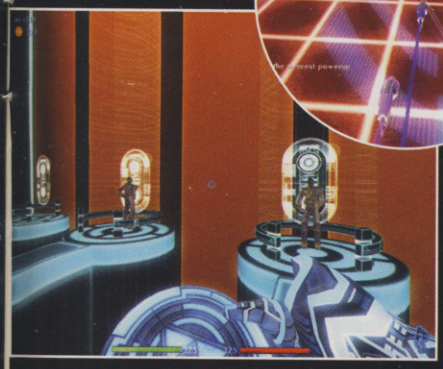
Search Archive Bins for new Defensive, Utility and Combat Subroutines

Just like in real life, Subroutines can be corrupted by viruses in the system

TRON 2.0

Multiplayer options include both Light Racing arenas and Disc battles

This huge puzzle involves using friendly programmes to open a Comms port



The cutscenes show off the gorgeous graphics and strange humour

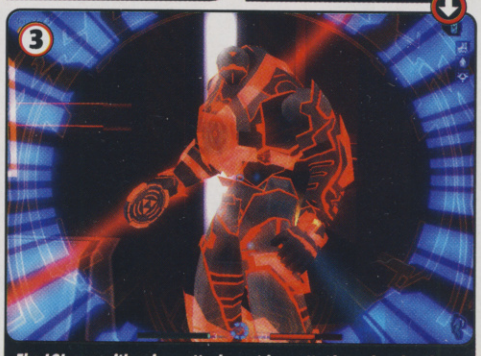
HARDWARE

Some of the weapons in the game are reproductions of those featured in the original film, and some entirely new creations have also been added.

You will also be able to acquire special weapons that are used by enemy programmes in their particular domain.

The Disc is your default weapon - you can upgrade it

Tickling ICP guards with your electrified Rod - cool!



The LOL gun with sniper attachment is pretty damn handy when it comes to picking off the enemy at a distance

GAME INFO ● COST: £34.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-16 ● OUT: NOW ● PUB: BUENA VISTA GAMES ● DEV: MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS ● WWW.ITRON20.NET

FIND OUT WHAT REALLY LURKS BENEATH YOUR COMPUTER'S BLAND EXTERIOR

Computers have a strange way of totally fragging up your working day. Take poor Jet Bradley, for instance. One minute he's shuffling about his lab thinking about doing a spot of light programming before lunch, the next he's been digitised by a giant laser and transported inside the company computer. Bummer.

WHEN GOOD MACHINES GO BAD...

Tron 2.0 picks up the action 20 years on from the events of the original cult 80s sci-fi film – acclaimed as the first to feature CGI special effects combined with live action and doubtless inspiration for a whole generation of games developers. Jet Bradley, the son of original hero Alan Bradley, is sucked into the mainframe and assimilated into the digital world. There he must try to save his father and stop the spread of a mysterious virus – you know the score. That said, the result is a sophisticated adventure that sizzles with the sort of in-jokes, razor sharp wit and computer geek humour that will keep sci-fi-loving shooter fans fully occupied until the long-awaited release of Deus Ex: Invisible War.

The graphics are breathtaking. NVidia's aptly named 'TRON glow' effect transforms the mundane wires and chips inside the different computer realms into shimmering swathes of vibrant pulsating colour. Each world has a very distinct feel and atmosphere, be it the retro innards of Alan Bradley's ancient PC, or the vast high-tech Server and Power Router interiors. There's no chance of finding yourself wandering endlessly through long, bland corridors in this game.

Tron 2.0 has that vital, indefinable quality that keeps you glued to your PC screen, playing deep into the night and forgetting to eat or drink. It may not have the RPG intricacies of Deus Ex or the chilling horror of System Shock 2, but the gripping gameplay elements and stylish themes will more than satisfy thrill-seeking gamers everywhere.

Platform elements such as jumping across vast gaps can be frustrating when using keyboard controls

The drama of Light Cycle racing is faithfully reproduced from the movie

In-between Light Cycle events, you get to chat up the laydee programs in the locker room

In Tron World, the punishment for underarm odour is a swift prod in the naughty bits

computer and video games VERDICT

Huge levels, compelling storyline, ruthless enemies and superbly smooth control system. There's not much we haven't seen before, but it's still a classy addition to the FPS genre. **Maura**

- ■ Vast worlds and huge missions
- ■ Much more than a regular FPS, with puzzle, platform and RPG elements
- ■ Music verges on the soporific at times
- ■ Lack of a map or radar sometimes makes it hard to find your bearings

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THIS... ■ Star Trek: Elite Force 2 (PC) ■ Deus Ex (PC)

WARHAMMER 40,000: FIREWARRIOR

Grenades and exploding barrels send flaming enemies flying. Bet that hurt

GAME INFO ONLINE GAMING ● COST: £34.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-8 ● OUT: SEPTEMBER 26 (PS2) OCTOBER 17 (PC) ● PUB: THQ ● DEV: KUJU ● WWW.THQ.CO.UK

FUTURISTIC FIRST-PERSON SHOOTING MAKING TABLETOP GAMING COOL

Nerds. Tabletop gaming with little lead figures. The two go together like chicken and fried. Tabletop gaming just isn't cool.

It's a shame because behind the hairy men in faded black T-shirts lie some really cool ideas. The Warhammer 40,000 game is set in the 41st millennium, where legions of hulking space marines are engaged in endless intergalactic battle with orcs and aliens with big, pulsating weapons.

ALIEN RESURRECTION

See, that sounds alright. Firewarrior is based within this world, but don't expect a smooth introduction. You're dropped right into a raging battle and the action never lets up. You play Kais, a young soldier fresh from recruitment, and must guide him through the trials of warfare to earn the elite status of Firewarrior.

The hook is that you're actually an alien, and spend most of the game blowing the heads off humans. It might make you feel a bit treacherous, but it also makes you feel *good*.

Firewarrior really benefits from the Warhammer universe. It's highly stylised, and if the character models and environments look great it's because they're the end result of years of design. It also helps to prevent the formula going stale – when you find yourself battling on the exposed deck of an enemy starship that looks more like a huge gothic cathedral you feel like you're seeing something fresh.

But it's not all style over substance. The action never stops, there are mercifully few puzzles and exploration segments, and although the targeting system feels a little loose to start with, you soon get used to it. Firefights become intense stand-offs with bullets and plasma bolts whizzing past you and your enemies' heads.

Nerds rejoice! Firewarrior is so good it might even make tabletop gaming cool. CVG

There are lots of corridors, but the relentless action keeps the pace up wherever you are

Fellow Firewarriors provide cover and thankfully act as more than cannon fodder

Weapons range from futuristic technology like plasma to good old-fashioned bullets

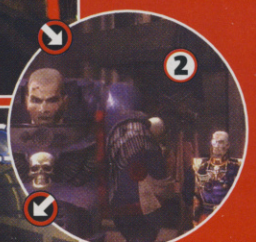
Firewarrior might not look all that original, but it does look impressive

IN SPACE, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU POO YOUR PANTS

The hardest, most badass bruisers in the Warhammer universe are the Colonial Space Marines.

When you come up against one of these armour-clad behemoths you'll soil your spacesuit, guaranteed. Unless you're already dead – they don't waste any time.

Mean, green, and not especially lean – more like massive and packing serious heat



The real daddies are the Chaos Space Marines – all the power with added evil

But they're not just bloodthirsty killing machines. This bloke did well at the Space Marine gymkhana

Getting into a prison is evidently just as difficult as escaping from one

computer and video games VERDICT

Solid first-person shooting with the emphasis on blasting people to bits, Firewarrior makes fantastic use of a good licence and manages to set itself apart from the troops. **Graeme**

- ■ Really feels like futuristic warfare
- ■ Brilliant enemies and weapons
- ■ Good plot with loads of twists
- ■ Not hugely original
- ■ Vanishing bodies and scripted events

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ TimeSplitters 2 (PS2) ■ Halo (Xbox)

SPLASHDOWN 2 Rides Gone Wild

RACING JET SKIS – WATERWAY TO SPEND AN AFTERNOON

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | ● COST: £19.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-2 ● OUT: NOW | ● PUB: THQ ● DEV: RAINBOW STUDIOS ● WWW.THQ.CO.UK

Who needs a holiday when you can go to the beach on your PS2?

Snow way he'll land that trick on the Arctic track...

The thing about extreme sports is that they're really niche. I mean, who goes jetski racing?

Maybe that's why they attracts the sort of radical wetsuit-clad dudes that populate Splashdown 2. While the original took a more serious approach, the sequel is about as restrained as a fat kid doing a belly flop from really high up.

Dino Dominion takes you through a malfunctioning Jurassic Park

The track design is often more exciting than the race – check out the crazy UFO!

THESE PEOPLE ARE CRAZY!

Being a bit 'extreme', the visuals are fun and dripping with colour. The level design is particularly wet and wild, with all sorts of mental stuff in the background like scaly dinosaurs snapping at your backwash. Glaciers crumble or pirate ships explode on every lap, keeping things interesting if not slightly surreal.

It's a pity then that the racing itself is so dull. The jet skis don't react to the water well, skimming across the surface rather than cutting and weaving through the waves. It's more like ice skating than anything else. There's a trick system that gives you speed boosts for sweet jet ski acrobatics, but you can get the same results just by hammering the Dpad.

Rides Gone Wild looks pretty cool, but it doesn't back any of it up with an enjoyable play experience. There isn't enough variety and it just isn't as much fun to play as something like Rainbow's ATV Offroad Fury 2. Not totally sunk then, but it is, unfortunately, a bit of damp sponge.

computer and video games VERDICT

Looks great and the characters are loud and likeable, but the fun dribbles out like you're squeezing water from a rag. Makes more of a ripple than a splash. **Graeme**

- ■ Funky cast of characters
- ■ Tricks equal speed
- ■ Rocking punky tunes
- ■ Dull handling
- ■ Too slow to be exciting

6 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Splashdown (PS2) ■ Wave Race (GC)

Hard? Yup, that's true enough. Good-looking? Sure. Weird as a bucket of anchovies? Yes siree!

Zero is the hero of the game, not Megaman

OK so it's a bit of metal on a rope, but the grappling hook is a hard device to master

If you beat the bosses with an 'S' or an 'A' rating, you can steal some of their special moves

MEGAMAN ZERO 2

GAME INFO | ONLINE GAMING | ● COST: £29.99 ● PLAYERS: 1-2 ● OUT: OCTOBER 17 | ● PUB: CAPCOM ● DEV: CAPCOM ● WWW.CAPCOM.COM

THE GBA'S HARDEST GAME IS HERE

Don't listen to what your brother says about games being too easy these days. Just let him loose on Megaman Zero 2 for ten minutes and giggle as the veins start popping on his forehead in frustration.

Anyone familiar with Megaman will already know how brutally difficult the games are, but while this is sure to send casual gamers fleeing for their sanity, fans of the action-packed series will go ape for this latest edition – particularly as it offers unlimited continues.

WHAT'S NEW?

The biggest change is a two-player, link-up mode that allows gamers to battle each other in action stages, race to collect items or try to escape specially designed levels. The new EX Skills also allow players to adopt the moves of the bosses they've defeated, and there's also an expanded roster of Cyber Elves who'll help you tackle enemies using their unique powers.

The game is still somewhat flawed with perilous leaps of faith, a clumsy system for changing weapons and a level of difficulty that will alienate all but the most hardcore gamers, but the solid gameplay, beautifully designed graphics and frantic music are enough to keep Megaman fans glued like limpets to their portable pal.

computer and video games VERDICT

If you like Megaman games you'll be totally addicted to this. It's beautiful to look at too, but casual players will still be frustrated by its brutal difficulty. **Dave**

- ■ Compelling action
- ■ Lush 2D graphics
- ■ Brilliant bosses
- ■ Too... damned... hard!
- ■ Very similar to previous edition
- ■ Switching weapons is a bit tricky

8 OUT OF TEN

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE... ■ Megaman Network Transmission (GC)

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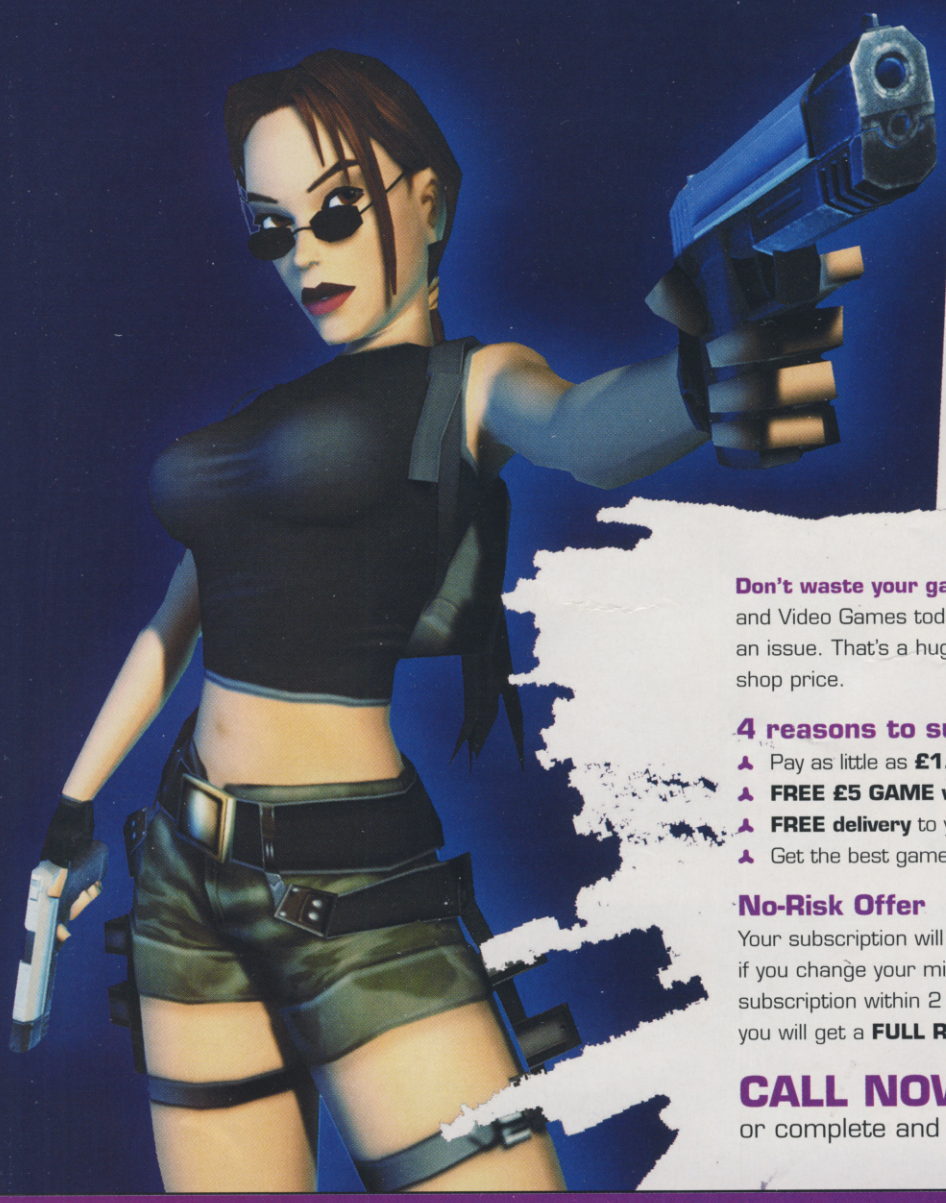

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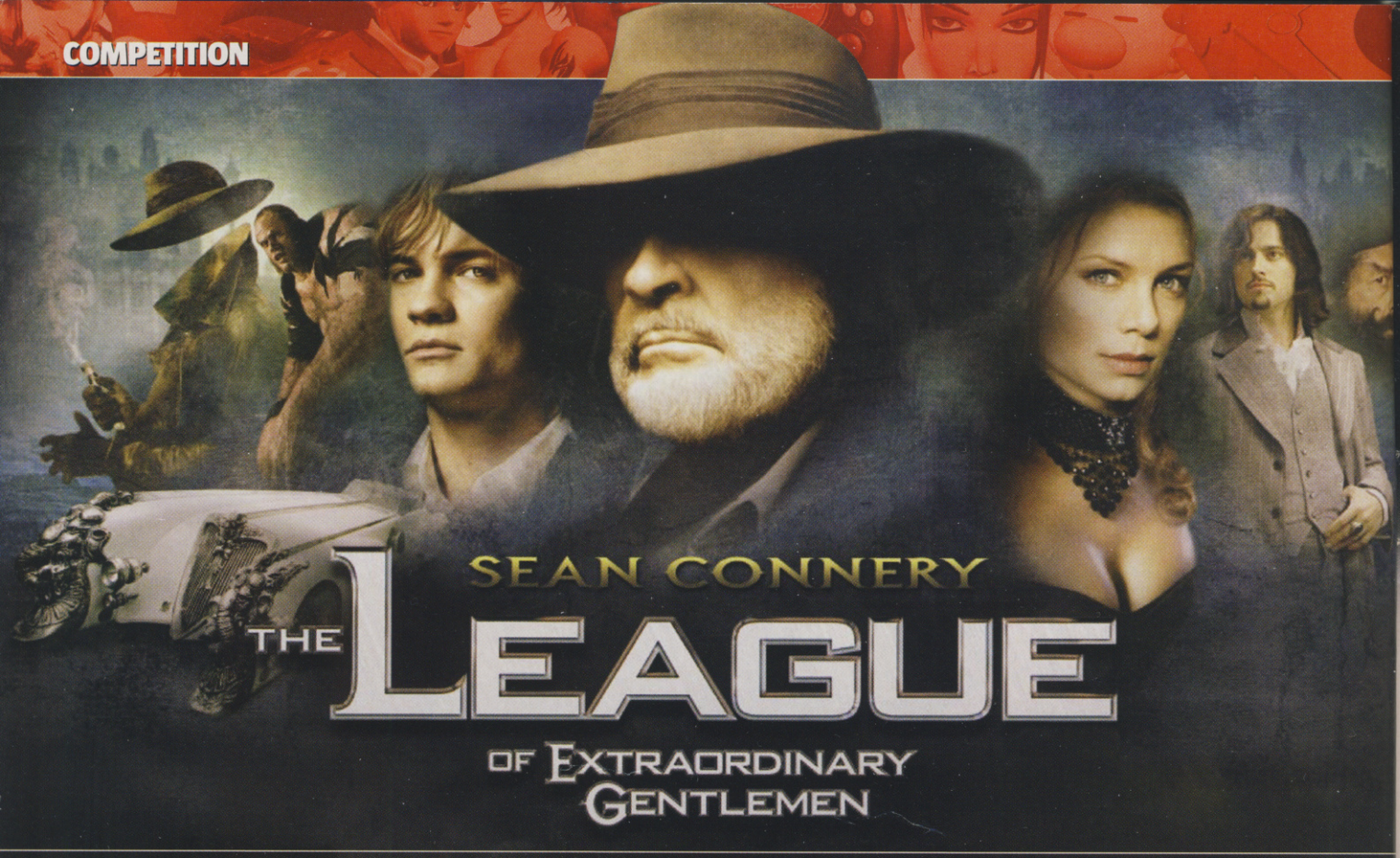

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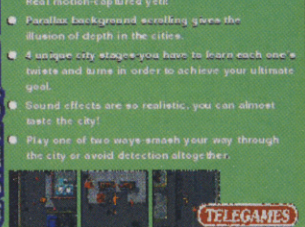

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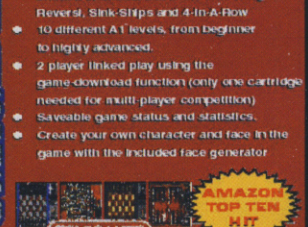

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CVG GRAND PRIX

THREE CONSOLES. THREE BLISTERING NEW RACERS. IT'LL BE THE RIDE OF THEIR LIVES BUT WHO'S IN POLE POSITION?

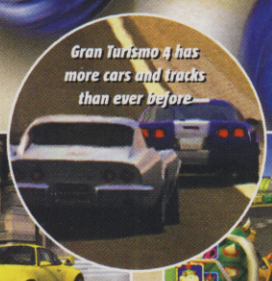
The revs are high. Exhausts are spitting. All three consoles are lining up their sexy new driving games in a wheel-to-wheel drag race – Gran Turismo 4 from Polyphony Digital, Bizarre Creations' Project Gotham Racing 2 and Mario Kart: Double Dash!! from Nintendo.

So far, we've had to satisfy ourselves with tantalising glimpses of concept models packed with the very latest in technology and growling with power, brief fumblings in darkened corners of trade shows or snatched quickies during secretive demo days.

Now we've gone all the way with all three, taking them down to the CVG Speedway and putting them through their paces with some of our finest test drivers. We even canvassed regular gamers' opinions at public hands-on sessions to bring you the most comprehensive run-down on the greatest race in the history of videogames.

The stakes don't come any higher – they're crucial releases for Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo, and the winner of this race will in no small way help decide the outcome of the console wars. They're on the grid, the engines are hot, the lights turn green and it's GO! GO! GO!

Race sports cars in real cities with Project Gotham 2


Gran Turismo 4 has more cars and tracks than ever before

Double Dash!! Worthy of two exclamation marks?

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
OUT: NOVEMBER 14
ONLINE GAMING
x8
WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM

MARIO KART Double Dash!!

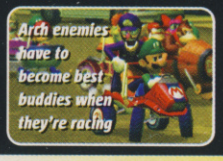
Chips. Just potato, cut up and fried, but so *good*. Sometimes the simplest things in life are the best – like Mario Kart. Pure racing fun with no photo-realistic graphics, no licensed car models, and no physics engines calculated by dandruff-flecked brainboxes. Just fun.

Ah, Mario Kart. The merest mention of it gets us all misty-eyed and nostalgic for those countless hours spent lobbing red shells at each other. We're more excited about Double Dash!! than a fat kid in a pie factory – and here are the reasons why!

CARS

Each of the characters has branded their vehicle with their own personality, so Mario drives a bouncy red quad, Donkey Kong has a mental wooden buggy, and Wario has a big purple convertible spewing noxious fumes. And if you get bored of your character's motor, just hop into another, because you can choose your kart too!

Another big difference is that you can now choose two characters from a choice of 16 for your kart. Once you're racing, one character drives while the other takes care of chucking stuff at your opponents. It's cool seeing Mario and Luigi in the same kart, but if you really want to stir things up why not put Bowser and Mario together?


Arch enemies have to become best buddies when they're racing

Mario hangs on the back as Wario shoots off the line

I'd have a banana, but the idea doesn't really a-peel to me

Double Dash!! has the feel of the original but with a lot more choice

TEST DRIVE

LOREN WEDDERBURN, 17

"The karts are cool because each of them are tweaked to a character's individual style. It's a nice novelty and makes a change from driving the same dull cars all the time."

PUBLISHER: SONY
DEVELOPER: POLYPHONY DIGITAL INC.
OUT: WINTER 2003
ONLINE GAMING
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GRAN TURISMO 4
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

You slam your foot on the accelerator and the engine roars in compliant rage. The corner looms out of the parched heat haze and you hit hard on the brakes, fighting with the steering wheel. The rear end kicks out, spraying dust into the deep chasm of the Grand Canyon. Then full throttle, exhaust yelling fury as the tyres squeal burning rubber and a big smile spreads across your face.

Welcome to the world of GT4, where everything depends on the split seconds between braking and accelerating. The Gran Turismo series historically held pole position on the racing game grid, but is the lead growing or shrinking?

HANDLING

In Gran Turismo, realism is the key to success. It's all about the experience, the exhilarating feeling of coaxing your favourite car perfectly round a hairpin bend and slamming on the gas.

The handling in GT3 was so good it seems unbelievable that they could improve it – but they have. The cars feel much heavier and react to the road surface much more realistically. Balancing acceleration and braking is more important than ever, since every slight change in the mechanics of your car will have an effect.

Fancy a Subaru? Suits you!

Customised street cars feature heavily

Cars handle like their real-life versions

Take Colin McRae's Subaru for a spin!

TEST DRIVE

SETAREH ERFAN, 17

"The controls are perfect. Every little variation in pressure produces exactly the result you want. I don't drive in real life but what's the point when this is so good?"

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
DEVELOPER: BIZARRE CREATIONS
OUT: AUTUMN
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PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

If Gran Turismo 3 is a refined cruise in a chauffeur-driven limousine, Project Gotham Racing is a joyride in a boy racer's turbo-charged hot hatch. In Gotham, coming first wasn't the only thing you had to worry about – you needed to look good doing it.

With over 100 officially licensed cars, photo-accurate and geographically precise cities to race around, and some of the most exciting online options we've ever seen – PGR2 is screaming off the racing grid like a flame red Ferrari Enzo stuffed full of nitrous oxide.

TRACKS

PGR2 is keeping it real. Knowing that the street-racing theme is of paramount importance to the game, developer Bizarre embarked on a quest to accurately model the streets of international cities for you to race around. For each city the team took almost 6000 photographs and 18 hours of video footage. The results are astonishing.

The cities include Chicago, Florence, Barcelona, Tokyo and even Edinburgh. They look so perfect you can recognise shop fronts and pick out hotel rooms you might have stayed in. Even all the street furniture is accurately mapped, so a lamppost will be exactly where it is in real life, making for a truly awesome driving experience.

Take your motor down under for a burn through Sydney, mate

Scream through Yokohama's neon-streaked streets

Race custom sports cars in the shadow of the train lines and skyscrapers of Chicago

It's Beautiful, Isn't It? And Stockholm Looks Alright, Too

HANDLING

Out on the track it's clear that Mario Kart: Double Dash!! ignores the mundane aspects of racing and goes for all-out fun.

The handling is twitchy but easy to get used to. At first you'll be skidding around like a puppy on tiles, but soon you'll be powersliding round bends with show-off sparks bursting from your wheels. It's quick, no-hanging-about fun with the emphasis firmly on keeping the excitement levels up!

Now that's a powerslide – watch the sparks fly!

Mario slithers into position for Luigi to wang his shell into a competitor's kart

Pile-ups are common on the corners – make sure you avoid them if you really want to win

The soft desert sand makes it difficult to keep your traction...

And snow doesn't really help either. Big skids ahoy!

TEST DRIVE

CVG'S GRAEME BOYD, 23

"The handling's really loose so it's a lot of fun skidding around corners. It's not very realistic, but it is a great laugh and feels just as good as previous Mario Kart games."

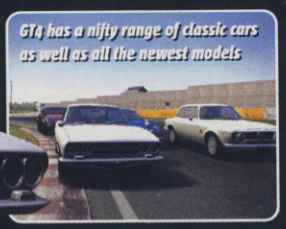
CARS

Gran Turismo has always been the true automotive fan's game of choice. Previous car lists have read like a boy racer's Christmas list, with more Subaru Imprezas and Mitsubishi Lancer Evolutions than down your local McDonald's car park on a Saturday night.

Not only has the list grown to over 500 cars for GT4, it's also diversified. Nestling alongside the Japanese pocket rockets you'll now find an extensive range of refined classic cars, some shockingly powerful American muscle cars, and the usual selection of top-of-the-range bonus models unlocked by winning races. With such a huge list it's guaranteed that you'll be able to track down your favourite motor.

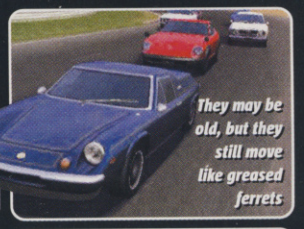
Sony has also promised car specifications that accurately reflect the real thing. To show off how well they'd done they compared real-life lap times with those in the game, and the difference was tiny. Who needs dreams when GT4 is so close to the real thing?

It might not look much to you, but your dad's going to go mental

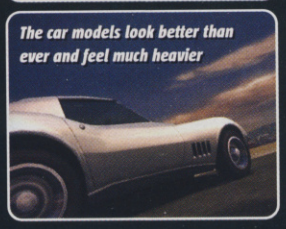


GT4 has a nifty range of classic cars as well as all the newest models

For the first time there's a great selection of American muscle cars



They may be old, but they still move like greased ferrets



The car models look better than ever and feel much heavier

Yo! You could do some serious big pimpin' in this monster

We're all for respecting classic automobiles, but that's just mingin'

TEST DRIVE

GRAEME BOYD, 23

"Driving your favourite car is the coolest thing about GT3, but GT4 leaves it for dust. Not only are there more cars, but they look even better, handling like the real thing!"

'GREEN HELL'

So you've mastered every track a racing game can throw at you? PGR2's got a little something for ya. Or rather, 13 miles of unforgiving tarmac that Jackie Stewart, one of the greatest race drivers ever, named 'Green Hell'.

This is the fearsome Nurburgring Nordschleife and trust us, if you manage to emerge from the tree-covered maze in anything even *close* to the seven-minute lap record you'll be doing very well indeed. Don't say we haven't warned you.

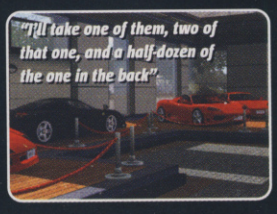
The world's longest and most fearsome racetrack for the first time in a videogame

Just you, the open road, and 600 horses throbbing under the bonnet

CARS

The original Project Gotham had 29 cars – PGR2 has 103. And we're not talking the kind of car you borrow off your mum – we're talking full-throttle, thoroughbred, tarmac-chewing monsters. From custom cars to project models, PGR2 has got the lot.

The motors are split into eight categories ranging from souped-up Renault Clios in the Compact class, to the work of automotive art that is the Ferrari Enzo in the Ultimate class. You can unlock the car of your dreams by earning enough kudos and then roaring down to the showroom to drool on the paintwork. Can't decide if you want to splash out on a million pound motor? Then take it for a test drive on the track!



"I'll take one of them, two of that one, and a half-dozen of the one in the back"

Take it out on the track, abuse it, then tell them you don't fancy it!

TEST DRIVE

CVG'S JOHNNY MINKLEY, 24

"This is awesome. A real rush. It's so cool driving at full throttle round real cities in the world's most beautiful cars. I'll take PGR2's 800bhp supercars any day!"

TRACKS

The Mario Kart games have always captured Mario's world well and in Double Dash!! it looks better than ever! Old favourites like Mario Raceway and the traffic choked Turnpike are all here, as well as some crazy new additions. On one track you drive up a tunnel only to get shot out of a massive cannon then land on the peak of an angry volcano, before racing all the way down avoiding rockslides and endless drops.

But it doesn't just look cool. Even more obstacles and jumps have been added to tracks to make races more exciting and frantic. For the first time F-Zero style boosts have been added to give you an extra burst of speed. But be careful – with even more obstacles on the track you have to be ready for anything!

And there's lots of opportunities for you to take a sneaky shortcut, since the tracks are riddled with them. If you know where to look, of course...

TEST DRIVE

ROBERT PRITCHARD, 17

"The variety of tracks is superb! Some are simple but on others there's loads to think about. It can be confusing, but once you settle in, all the extra detail is excellent."

You'll need to watch out for Sunday drivers as well as your opponents

Line up the jumps properly or crash out

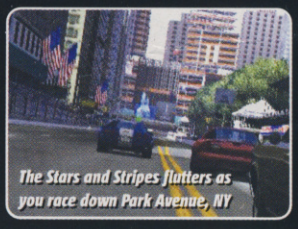
That's not a tunnel – it's a bleedin' cannon!

»

TRACKS

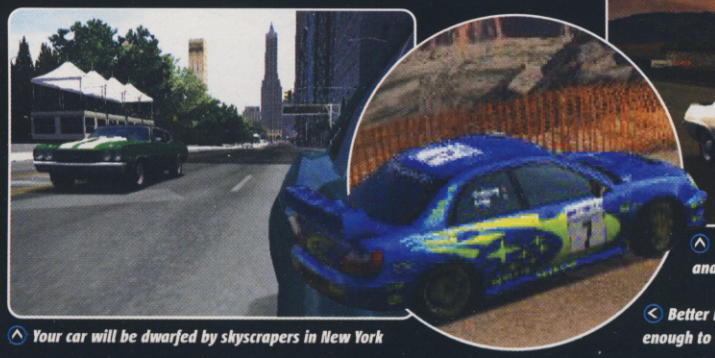
Just like the cars, the tracks in GT4 are as close to the real things as you could imagine. There are over 100 different tracks, ranging from perfectly modelled city centre streets to a rally track perched on the edge of the Grand Canyon. And if looking at the last GT was like casting your eyes over the beautiful curves of a Porsche, GT4 is taking that Porsche, dipping it in gold and encrusting it with diamonds. Have a gander at the screenshots – can PS2 games look any better? We doubt it.

So, great, they look nice, but how do they race? Well, imagine gunning a vintage Mustang through Times Square in New York at 150 mph, or screaming through the tight, cobbled streets of an Italian village in a Ferrari. It feels as good as it sounds. Not only does GT4 shift faster than a fly on Red Bull, but it completely immerses the player in its vivid blend of racing reality.



The Stars and Stripes flutters as you race down Park Avenue, NY

The Grand Canyon track perfectly captures the atmosphere of the place



Your car will be dwarfed by skyscrapers in New York

Better hope that orange netting is strong enough to keep you on the road

TEST DRIVE

HARKARAN GILL, 15

"More cars, more tracks, more realistic – it's much better than the last one! Driving through narrow streets at top speed made me feel just like Steve McQueen in Bullitt!"

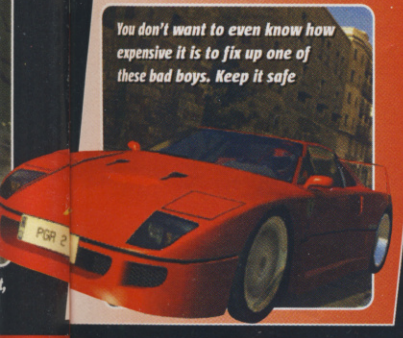
The famous lens-flare effect is back and looking better than ever

»

BRING YOUR INSURANCE

You might want to brake a little bit harder going into the corners in PGR2. The cars here don't make excuses for any dodgy driving.

Bonnets crumple and come loose, headlights burst and spoilers collapse. It doesn't affect handling, but the sight of a mangled Porsche is enough to bring a tear to anyone's eye. So drive carefully, you hear?



You don't want to even know how expensive it is to fix up one of these bad boys. Keep it safe

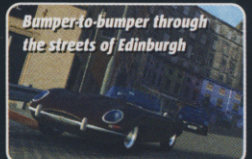
ONLINE

In the online stakes PGR2 is as innovative as a concept car. The standard options are all screwed firmly into place, so you can race with seven other drivers over Live or System Link, using the headset to exercise your road rage muscle. The developer has been clever enough to incorporate a cheat disable, meaning that idiot who keeps driving round the track backwards will be ghosted so he can't foul up your racing line.

Even better, if you are connected to Live, your statistics, and every other player's in the world, are constantly updated and ranked in a series of leaderboards. Just put in a blistering lap on your favourite course? You'll instantly be able to see how you match up to everyone else. On top of that you can check out how other players achieved their laptimes by watching their ghosts, and you can even race against them! We're certain it's going to create the most exciting and competitive racing game experience ever!

PGR2's online play will change racing games forever. It's that good

Go head-to-head for the ultimate racing showdown



Bumper-to-bumper through the streets of Edinburgh

Set the world record on your fave course, then boast

Different classes can race together, with less powerful cars rewarded more

»

WEAPONS

One of the coolest things about Mario Kart has always been the weapon system. Even if you're in last place and trailing the pack, one pick-up can turn your race around.

There are six standard weapons like the homing red shell and the awesome lightning bolt, but on top of that each character has an individual special weapon like Luigi's fireballs or Bowser's famous spiky shells! It really adds a tactical dimension to the racing since you have to decide who to put in charge of your weapons as well as when to use them on your opponents.

"Hey-a you-a! You want-a one of my fireballs, yes?"

Yoshi's kart is a green monstrosity

As if the shell wasn't big enough already, he's gone and put spikes on it!

TEST DRIVE

THOMAS PEDALINO, 17

"The new weapons make it more frantic than ever – one second you're in first and the next you could be in last! The magic of Mario Kart is still there!"

PETROL-HEAD RATING

So you don't know your ass from your LSD (that's Limited Slip Differential)? Don't worry, you can always learn. If a petrol-head had a wet dream and woke up to find their sheets covered in motor oil, GT4 would be responsible – in the nicest way possible way, of course.

There's over 500 cars, from classics to the cutting edge of automotive engineering. And with the opportunity to soup them up and trick them out with turbos, alloy wheels and new paint jobs, GT4 will be the most complete and in-depth racing game ever. Okay, so you might find tweaking your carburettor about as exciting as long division, but it's like taking out the gherkins from your burger – not much fun while you're doing it, but you're glad you did.

Fix springy shocks and racing suspension to keep the landing soft

As usual you'll be able to fit custom alloy wheels and racing tyres

We're expecting extensive new tuning options and hardware

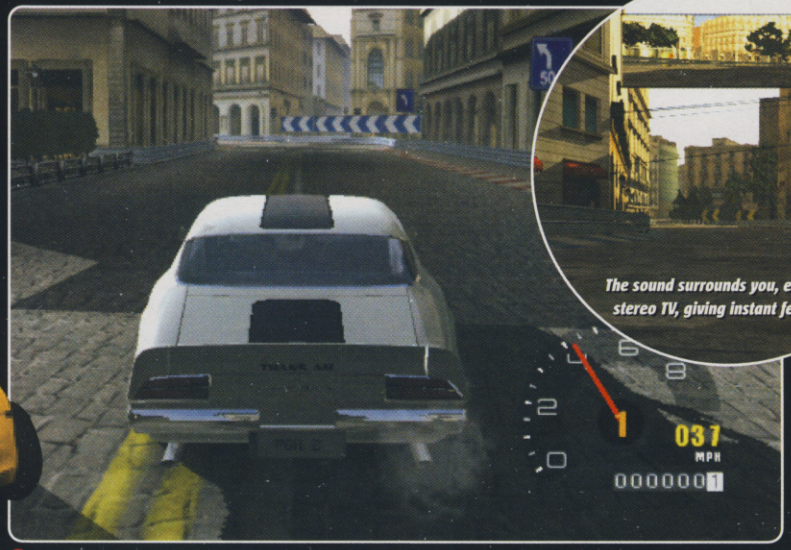
Tuning your motor can make the difference between first and last place

ENGINE NOTES

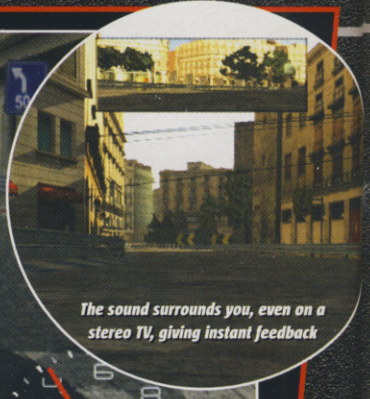
Real race drivers rely on the different sounds their car makes to judge laps, so PGR2 feeds you enough sonic information to let you do the same.

Each wheel has a different soundtrack, as do the separate components of the engine. It sounds amazing and all of the motors were sampled so the sound is as realistic as possible. Cars this expensive come with a radio too, and you can listen to three licensed DJs from each city playing over 250 licensed songs.

You can't hear it, but it's going "NEeaaow REEEEee GRRRRRRR!"



You can rip your own CDs onto the hard drive and the DJ will play them while you race around



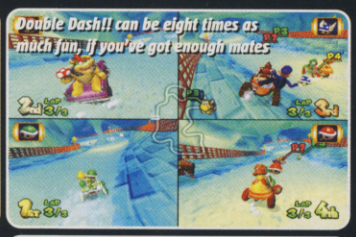
The sound surrounds you, even on a stereo TV, giving instant feedback

ONLINE

Double Dash!! isn't going to be online-compatible – that would be the end of civilisation since everyone would be playing it.

It's not all bad news, though. Using a LAN connection you can link two GameCubes for eight-player madness. Just imagine how much fun it'd be racing against seven mates! And of course, the battle mode that made the first two games so much fun makes a glorious return along with new modes like the Bob-omb battle where you chuck bombs at each other.

We've wasted so much of our lives playing multiplayer Mario Kart, but it was fun


Double Dash!! can be eight times as much fun, if you've got enough mates

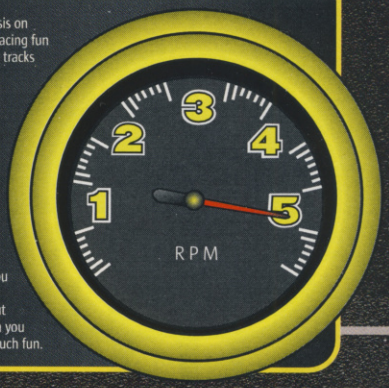
Walloping your mates with a shell is oh so sweet – battle mode rules!

Trust us – it's going to swallow up a whole lot of your time...

MARIO KART Double Dash!!

REV-O-METER

With its emphasis on unadulterated racing fun and its cars and tracks free from the wheelclamps of realism, Mario Kart: Double Dash!! is more refreshing than an ice cube down your pants, with multiplayer mode the icing on the cake. It might not let you drive the car of your dreams, but who cares when you can have this much fun.



ONLINE

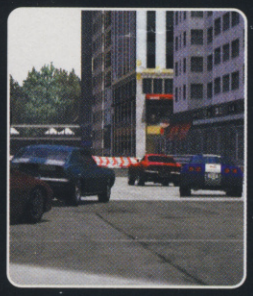
Probably the only thing that has held the Gran Turismo series back has been the computer-controlled opponents' dodgy AI. Lap after lap, race after race, they would dumbly stick to the same racing line.

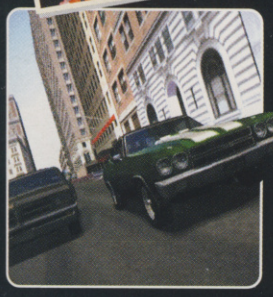
Sony has promised to sort this out in the single-player mode, but why not bypass the problem altogether and race your mates! With online support for six people to race, and the opportunity for them to chat, GT4 could be the start of a whole new car culture lived at full throttle through the phone lines.

TEST DRIVE

ABDUL ALSAIEGH, 13

"All the extra features make GT4 totally worthwhile, and playing online will be excellent! I can't wait to challenge my friends and show them who's best!"





Imagine how exciting it'll be racing GT4 online

Online head-to-head deathmatches ahoy!

TEST DRIVE

MOHAMMED SADOON, 13

"It's going to sell much more now it's online and playing against other people will be far more challenging. I'll be practising loads – I don't want to embarrass myself!"

GRAN TURISMO 4
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

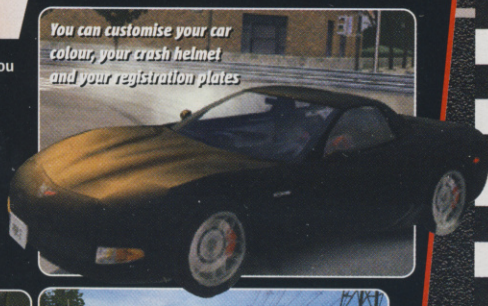
REV-O-METER

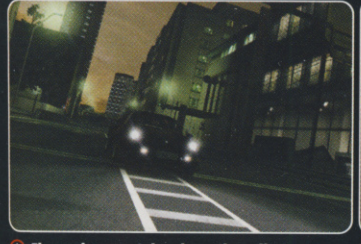
Like a new Ferrari, GT4 is the product of a proud automotive heritage and an exquisite understanding of the motor car. The new additions will satisfy even the most hardcore petrol-head, and it's so realistic it should come bundled with leather-palmed driving gloves. The choice of the connoisseur and more realistic than ever before!

PETROL-HEAD RATING

Project Gotham 2 might be about cars, but you don't need to be an engine-head with high-octane fuel running through your veins to understand it.

While the cars all behave and handle like their real-life counterparts, PGR2 is about accessibility and fun rather than tinkering with a valve to squeeze out an extra ounce of torque. The result is a petrol tank overflowing with five-star adrenalin and no need for pitstops to fill it up.


You can customise your car colour, your crash helmet and your registration plates

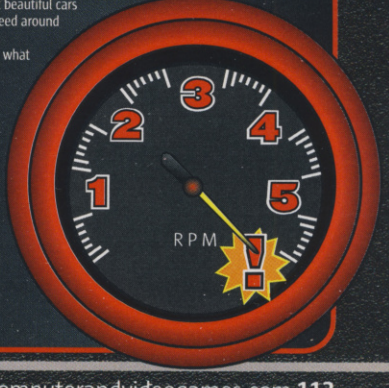

The environmental and weather effects are as beautiful as the cars. Just take a look at that

There's plenty to keep boy racers happy, like this mint Supra, for example

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

REV-O-METER

The world's most beautiful cars driving at top speed around the world's most beautiful cities – what more could you possibly want? Add in a whole host of revolutionary online options and PGR2 could be the racing game we've always dreamed of. Gran Turismo better check its rear view mirror, because PGR2 is coming up fast!



CACKMAN'S THOUGHT OF THE MONTH Good to see Crystal Dynamics are on the Tomb Raider case. They certainly proved their credentials with their three amazing Mario-beating Gex games.

CACKMAN©

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE FREE GAMING NATION

THE TEN WORST

CONSOLE NAMES EVER

It's not hard is it? As long as you use words like Super, Mega or Ninja, you can't fail. That's why Cackman despairs as we count down this parade of disgusting naming ineptitude. If you actually liked any of these, you're banned from gaming forever. Drop the joypad and sod off. Go on!

10 SEGA 'GENESIS'
The American name for the Mega Drive. Only looks like Phil Collins if you'd squashed him down and set him on fire until burnt black.
■ **Better name: Sega Mega Drive (obviously)**

STUPIDEST MOMENTS IN GAMING 1
THAT *HUUGE* XBOX PAD
When it comes to making joypads, there is only one golden rule...
Human beings don't have really giant hands like some freaky, planet-crushing space monster. Another law that Microsoft stupidly assumed didn't apply to them. Unless their pad engineer is some kind of fat-handed freak.

9 ATARI 'JAGUAR'
Looked less like a deadly wild cat or sleek sports car, and more like a hard-baked cowpat. And the joypad looked like a retarded mobile phone. Bad.
■ **Better name: Atari No-It's-Not-Even-Worth-It-For-Tempest 2000**

8 NINTENDO 'VIRTUAL BOY'
There was nothing 'virtual' about it. It existed. It was an *Actual* Boy. And it was actually rubbish. Never released in Europe because it blinded people.
■ **Better name: Nintendo VR Error**

7 SEGA 'DREAMCAST'
Was Sega's 'dream' to have the shortest lived major console ever that nobody besides themselves had any interest in developing for? Somehow Cackman doubts it.
■ **Better name: Sega Still Waiting For The PS2 Dev Kit-o-Tron**

6 SNK 'NEO GEO'
Translated it means 'new world'. Cackman assumes that this is because at £200 each, the games cost *the earth*. It was cheaper to buy the actual arcade versions...
■ **Better name: SNK Hardcore Idiot Impresser**

5 NINTENDO 'GAMECUBE'
So it's vaguely like a Cube and it plays games? Is that the best they could do? How about Nintendo Super Death Ninja? And where are the games, by the way?
■ **Better name: Nintendo 64 Part 2**

4 ATARI 'LYNX'
Cackman rolled it under his arms, but still stunk as bad as ever. And girls didn't dance like in the advert. Cackman likes to party. Everybody does.
■ **Better name: Atari Craneheld**

3 NINTENDO 'GAME BOY'
It's clearly not a boy. Boys have a penis. It has a slot of sorts, so in actual fact is a Game Girl. No, that doesn't mean you can [redacted]. Pervert.
■ **Better name: Nintendo Last Good Idea (which they've milked to death)**

STUPIDEST MOMENTS IN GAMING 2
GIVING MARIO A VOICE
In 2D, it didn't matter that Mario couldn't talk. He wasn't a public orator, he was a little dude who jumped on turtles. Then Charles Martinet came along in his hilariously rubbish Hawaiian shirt, squealing like the most annoying kid in a special secure institute for the world's most annoying kids. Nintendo: shut that fanny up! NOW!

2 COMMODORE 'AMIGA'
'Amiga' is Spanish for 'girlfriend' – something Amiga owners never had then or have had since. Disgusting, hairy-backed losers.
■ **Better name: Commodore (Spanish for 'hairy palms')**

1 MICROSOFT 'XBOX'
The king of crap names. It means nothing. Except in Japan where selling about four consoles a week makes it an Ex-Box.
Better name: anything

WHAT CORE DO NOW

Cackman can't figure out games companies. Core delivered a Tomb Raider just as crap as the old ones, and overshot the lucrative Christmas sales market by, ooh, only seven months or so. And Eidos sacked them? WHY FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE? Here's what they do now...

1. TOMB RAIDER: HOT DOG STAND
Made from bits of vicious dogs that Lara killed. They're cheap, but if you want mustard you have to push a massive stone and then look behind some bushes at the other end of the park.

2. TOMB RAIDER: TAILORING
Suits are made unusually tight, so as to grip you like a full-body corset. Makes it difficult to run straight, and you end up banging into walls all the time. Any sort of rapid evasive action is impossible.

3. TOMB RAIDER: SWIMMING INSTRUCTORS
They make it pointlessly difficult to dive in instead of just falling pathetically, and then you end up drowning because the perspective shifts constantly so up is suddenly down. And there are sharks in the water.

WRITE TO CACKMAN

You lot must have ideas. Questions. Theories. Write to Cackman at the usual address, and the best will win an awesome prize! Senders of anything Cackman considers to be crap will be subjected to GBH in text form on this very page. Come on! You want to be famous, don't you? What else have you got to live for in your stupid little lives?

Cackman's opinions aren't necessarily those of CVG

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BABY BOY - beyonce/sean paul	112933	LIFE GOT COLD - girls aloud	112854	GOING UNDER - evanescence	112968
RIGHT THURR - chingy	112868	RUBBERNECKIN - elvis presley	112864	THOIA THONG - r kelly	112948
PRETTY GREEN EYES - ultra beat	112877	CHIHUAHUA - dj bobo	112905	SWEET DREAMS - rachel stevens	112949
CRAZY IN LOVE - beyonce knowles	112707	FIX UP LOOK SHARP - dizzee rascal	112937	THESE DAYS - alien ant farm	112907
GHETTO MUSIC - outkast	112981	SUNSHINE - gareth gates	112906	SOMEDAY - nickelback	112967
LIKE GLUE - sean paul	112785	DANCE - lemar	112934	BROKEN SILENCE - so solid crew	112969
BABY BOY - big brovaz	112859	I BELIEVE IN A THING.. - darkness	112972	YEAH WHATEVER - westlife	112976
SENORITA - justin timberlake	112732	I CANT LET YOU GO - ian van dahl	112918	SHOW ME A SIGN - kontakt	112979
CAN'T HOLD US D.. - c.aguilera/l.kim	112860	HERE COMES THE SUN.. - love inc	112870	AMERICAN IN AMSTER.. - wheatus	112962
SHAKE YA TAILF.. - nelly/diddy/lee	112839	DANCE COMMANDER - electric six	112876	RE-OFFENDER - travis	112975

*Yes!!! All Ringtones are Monophonic and Polyphonic **

POLYPHONICS COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA 3510, 3510i, 6610, 7210, 7650. SAMSUNG T100, N600. SHARP GX10. SONY ERICSSON T300. SAGEM MYG-5. MOTOROLA T720. PANASONIC GD87. SIEMENS C55.
RINGTONE COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA: 3210, 3310, 3330, 3410, 5210, 5510, 61XX, 62XX, 6310, 6310i, 8210, 8310, 8110i, 88XX, 7110, 7210, 7650, AND THE 9110(i). SAGEM: MC930, MC/MW932, MC936, MC/MW939, MC940, MC942, MC946, MC949 MC950, MC952, MC956 & MC959(R) MOTOROLA: T250, V50, V100, V8088 & TIMEPORT 260 SAMSUNG: T100, N600 SIEMENS: S45, SL45, C45, ME45, M50, A50, C55

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WI...

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nu metal

THE ANTHEM - good charlotte	112493
FAINT - linkin park	112713
NUMB - linkin park	112886
LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH... - g charlotte	112388

reggae

GET BUSY - sean paul	112634
NO WOMAN NO CRY - bob marley	111331
GIMME THE LIGHT - sean paul	112422
ANGEL - shaggy	111114

club classics

SATISFACTION - benny benassi	112751
CAFE DEL MAR - energy 52	111386
INSOMNIA - faithless	111569
ITS LIKE THAT - run dmc/jason nevins	112901

chill out

CHILDREN - robert miles	111361
BRAVEHEART - dj sakin	111719
UNFINISHED SYMPATHY - mas. attack	112437
FOR AN ANGEL - paul van dyk	111363

grunge

SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT - nirvana	112930
ALL MY LIFE - foo fighters	112913
ALIVE - pearl jam	112956
LEARN TO FLY - foo fighters	112922

urban

MUNDIAN TO BACH KE - panjabi mc	112342
FAVOURITE THINGS - big brovaz	112560
SCANDALOUS - mis-teeq	112444
CAN'T GET IT BACK - mis-teeq	112733

chart

FAST FOOD SONG - fast food rockers	112702
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL - robbie	112840
ROCK YOUR BODY - justin timberlake	112508
SLEEPING WITH THE LIGHT.. - busted	112819
NEVER GONNA LEAVE.. - d.bedingfield	112710
IT'S A CHEEKY HOLIDAY - cheeky girls	112882
FEEL GOOD TIME - pink	112755
SEND YOUR LOVE - sting	112971
GET IT TOGETHER - seal	112952
YEAR 3000 - busted	112344
IF YOU'RE NOT THE.. - d. bedingfield	112311
FIGHTER - christina aguilera	112649
CRY ME A RIVER - justin timberlake	112360
UNWELL - matchbox twenty	112748
INNOCENT EYES - delta goodrem	112770

r & b

BREATHE - blu cantrell feat. sean paul	112521
IGNITION - REMIX - r kelly	112642
NEVER LEAVE YOU - lumidee	112774
FRONTIN - pharrell williams feat jay z	112855
SNAKE - r kelly feat tigger	112687
NO LETTING GO - wayne wonder	112690

party time

ONE STEP BEYOND - madness	111278
THE CHEEKY SONG - the cheeky girls	112313
KUNG FU FIGHTING - carl douglas	111419

football

ARE YOU READY FOR LOVE - elton john	112869
MR BIG STUFF - SOCCER AM - j knight	112559
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE - liverpool	111351
MATCH OF THE DAY - match of the day	111126
GREAT ESCAPE - sheffield wednesday	111354
LIFE OF RILEY - lightning seeds	112880
BLUE IS THE COLOUR - chelsea*	111348
GLORY GLORY - man utd*	111353
WERE ON THE BALL - ant and dec	111958
WHEN THE SAINTS GO.. - southampton	112645
3 LIONS - baddiel & skinner*	111494
VINDALOO - fat les	111349
NEWCASTLE ANTHEM - newcastle*	111357
HOU'LL LET THE DOGS OUT - liverpool	111355
TUBTHUMPER - chumbawamba	111209
MARCHIN ON TOGETHER - leeds*	111350
BLUE MOON - man city*	111352
EAT MY GOAL - collapsed lung*	111356
COUNTRY ROAD - hermes house band	111571
SVEN SVEN SVEN - bell and sperling*	111470
HERE COME THE GOOD.. - irish squad*	111964
ARSENAL - GO WEST - pet shop boys	112647

indie

I JUST DON'T KNOW... - w stripes	112892
GENIE IN A BOTTLE - speedway	112917
SEVEN NATION ARMY - white stripes	112604
FOOLS GOLD - stone roses	111230

hip hop

IN DA CLUB - 50 cent	112440
21 QUESTIONS - 50 cent feat nate dogg	112582
BUSINESS - eminem	112695
X GONNA GIVE IT TO YA - dmx	112617
FORGET ABOUT DRE - dr dre	111138
LOSE YOURSELF - eminem	112289
BEAUTIFUL - snoop dogg	112511
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT - b rhymes	112561
SUPERMAN - eminem	112427
FEELIN YOU - n.o.r.e	112660
HOT BOYS - missy elliot	112685
HELL YEAH - ginuwine feat baby	112771
LETS GET DOWN - bow wow feat baby	112335
HOW YOU WANT THAT - loon and kelis	112945

dance

FLY ON THE WINGS OF LOVE - xtm	112705
HEAVEN - dj sammy	112229
LONELINESS - tomcraft	112576
THE POWER OF BHANGRA - snap vs	112310
DEEPEST BLUE - deepest blue	112821
TOO FAR GONE - lisa scott-lee	112865

night fever

PUSH IT - salt-n-pepa	112551
DANCING QUEEN - abba	111111
YMCA - village people	111435

ibiza essential

MAKE LOVE - room 5	112465
SANDSTORM - darude	111290
I'M IN HEAVEN - jason nevins	112781

rock

BRING ME TO LIFE - evanescence	112651
SWEET CHILD O MINE - guns and roses	111258
BAT OUT OF HELL - meatloaf	111286
LIVING ON A PRAYER - bon jovi	111376
ENTER SANDMAN - metallica	111371

ballads

DANCE WITH MY FATHER - l vandross	112973
ANGELS - robbie williams	112646
RED RED WINE - ub40	111248

irish

FIELDS OF ATHENRY	112470
BROWN EYED GIRL - van morrison	111327
WHISKEY IN THE JAR	112474

themes

ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES	111369
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	111121
THE SIMPSONS	111132
ROCKY - jogging theme	112481
EXORCIST	111871
JACKASS	112554
SCOOBY DOO	111142
AXEL F - beverley hills cop	111601
ROCKY	111141
PHOENIX NIGHTS	112364
SEX AND THE CITY	111673
MUPPETS	111134
GOOD BAD AND THE UGLY	111181
BANANA SPLITS	112578
WINNIE THE POOH	111613
DIRTY DANCING	111249
THE A TEAM	111115
HARRY POTTER	111548
STAR WARS	111125
THE TERMINATOR	111602
FRIENDS	111152
MATRIX - rage against the machine	111848

*Denotes Monophonic only!

colour pix

Nokia ● Sony Ericsson ● Sharp ● Samsung

250021 250108 250059 250055 250042 251345 250336 250012

251353 Christina | 251314 Becks | 251350 Britney | 251348 Beyonce | 251255 Kylie | 251355 Justin | 251250 Jenny | 251210 Eminem

COLOUR WALLPAPER COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA: 3510i, 3650, 6100, 6610, 7210, 7250, 7650. SONY ERICSSON: T68i, T610, P800. SHARP: GX10. SAMSUNG: V200.

You must have a Wap enabled handset!!!

pictures

Nokia ● Samsung ● Sony Ericsson ● Siemens

141087 141811 141130 141286 141387 142088 142026 142119
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141431 142004 141068 141066 142089 141095 142116 141021
141493 142021 141217 141793 141796 142114 142112 141301
141668 141215 141142 141216 141288 141002 141245
141779 141594 141078 142096 141451 141775 141765 141764
141057 141670 142095 141304 142090 141242 141760 141303

PICTURE MESSAGE COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA: 3210, 3310, 3330, 3410, 3510, 3510i, 5210, 5510, 6210, 6250, 6310, 6310i, 7210, 7650, 8210, 8850, AND 9110(i). NOKIA 3310, 3330, 3410, 5510, 7650 CAN USE PICTURES AS SCREEN SAVERS. ERICSSON: T20E, R520M SAMSUNG: T100, N600 . SONY ERICSSON: T68, T68i SIEMENS: S45, SL45, C45, ME45, M50, A50, C55

logos

Siemens ● Samsung
Nokia ● Sony Ericsson

131696 131791 131810 131134
131674 131682 131663 131127
131107 131688 131629 131797
131666 131787 131544 131582
131726 131223 131266 131449
131467 131693 131262 131576
131616 131710 131450 131141
131692 131596 131244 131156

LOGO COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA: 402, 702, 3210, 3310, 3330, 3410, 3510, 3510i, 5110, 5130, 5146, 5210, 5510, 6110, 6130, 6150, 6210, 6250, 6310, 6310i, 7110, 7210, 7650, 8810, 8210, 8310, 8810, 8850, 8890, AND 9110(i) ERICSSON: T20E, R520M SAMSUNG: T100, N600 SONY ERICSSON: T68, T68i SIEMENS: S45, SL45, C45, ME45, M50, A50, C55

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Ice Blade Penguin	210107
Maze Ark	210136
Escape Master	210109

210103 210117 210106 210118 210137 210119 210146 210116 210227

GAMES COMPATIBILITY - NOKIA: 3410, 3510i, 5100, 6100, 6310i, 6610, 7210, 7250, 7650, 8910i SHARP: GX10 SIEMENS: C55, M50, MT50 MOTOROLA T720

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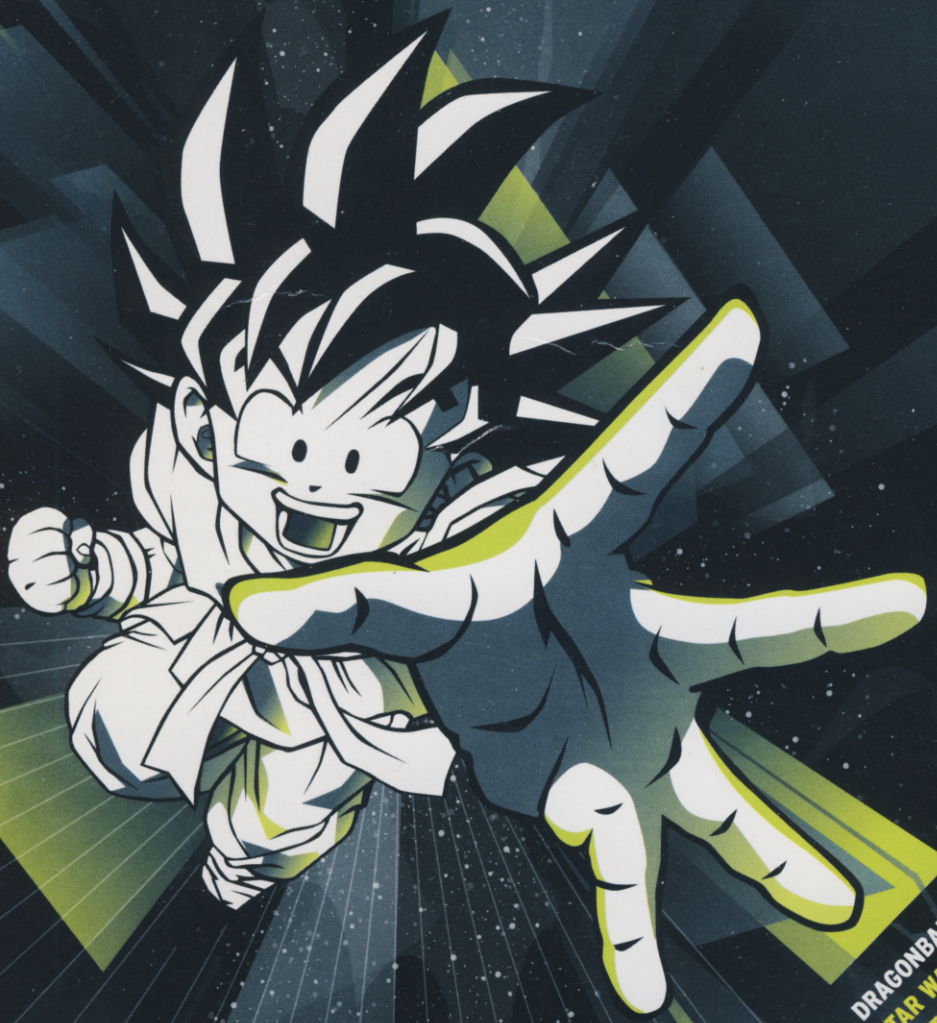

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